

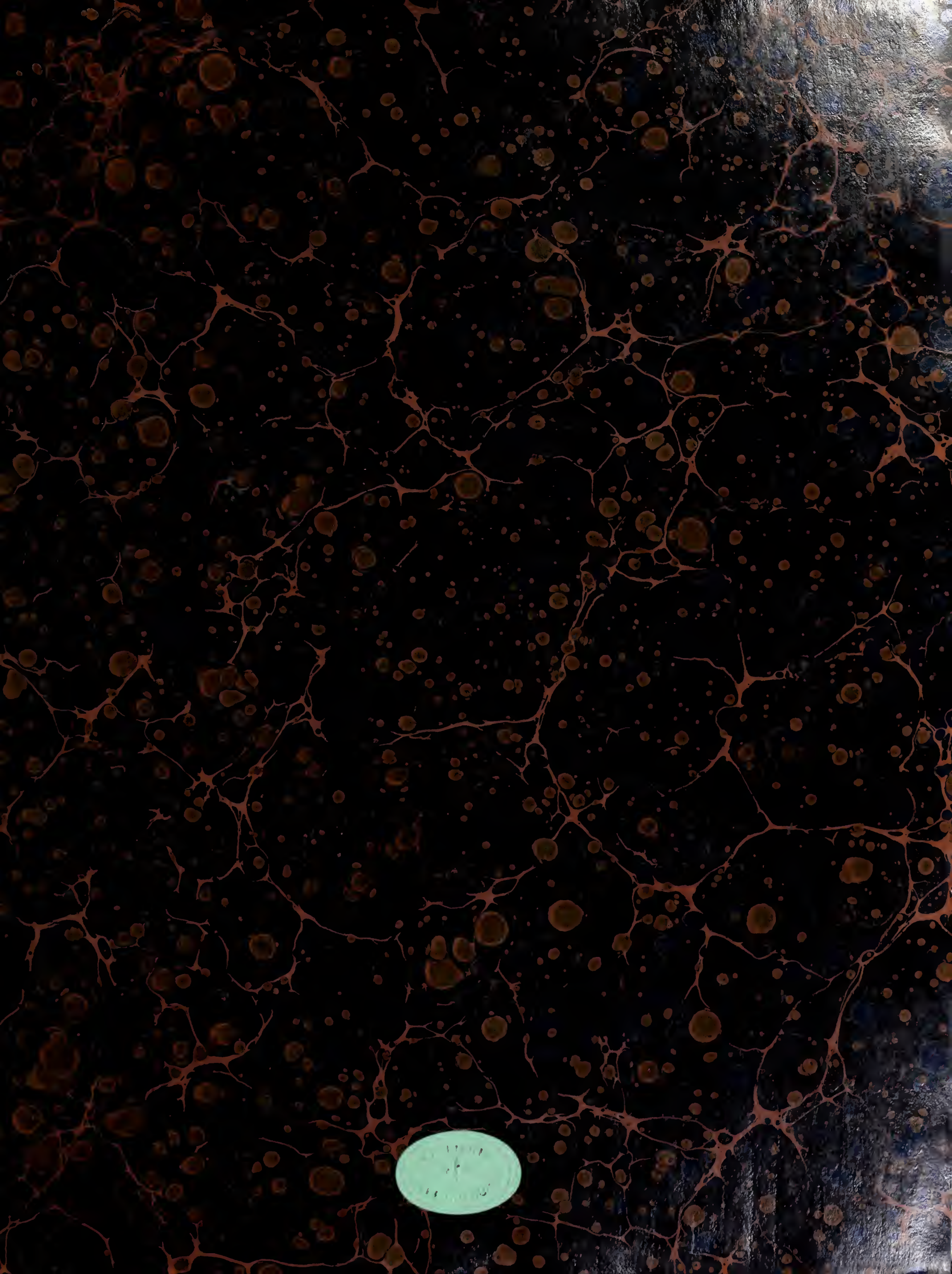






Sir. John  
Martin Harvey Kt









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RUBENS















# RUBENS

BY

MAX ROUSES

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DEPARTMENT OF ARTS AND ARCHITECTURE, UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO  
CONTAINS IN FIFTEEN VOLUMES

VOLUME I



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1904

PORTRAIT OF RUBENS  
(Uffizi, Florence)





Portrait of Rubens  
(Uffizi, Florence)



# RUBENS

BY

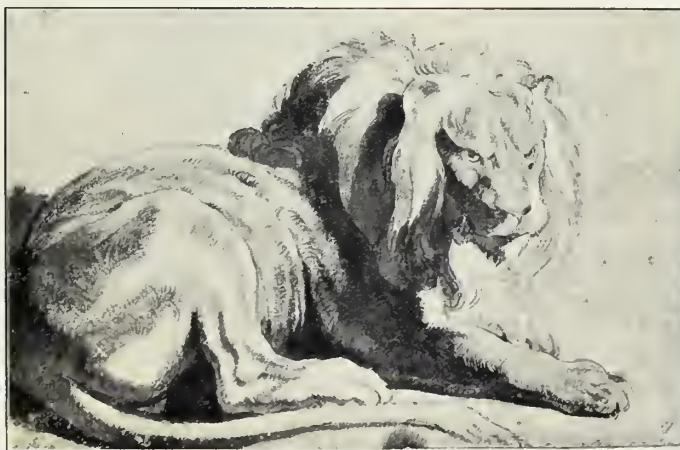
MAX ROOSES

KEEPER OF THE PLANTIN-MORETUS MUSEUM, ANTWERP, AUTHOR OF ŒUVRE DE RUBENS, ETC. ETC  
AND JOINT EDITOR OF THE CORRESPONDANCE DE RUBENS AND BULLETIN RUBENS

TRANSLATED BY HAROLD CHILD

ILLUSTRATED BY OVER 350 REPRODUCTIONS OF RUBENS'S WORKS,  
INCLUDING 70 FULL-PAGE ILLUSTRATIONS IN HELIOGRAVURE AND FACSIMILE

VOLUME I



LONDON : DUCKWORTH & Co  
3, HENRIETTA STREET, COVENT GARDEN, W. C.

1904





TO  
JAN VAN RIJSWIJCK  
BURGOMASTER OF ANTWERP  
THIS BOOK IS DEDICATED IN TESTIMONY  
OF HIGH ESTEEM AND  
IN REMEMBRANCE  
OF TWENTY-FIVE YEARS OF  
FAITHFUL FRIENDSHIP





## INTRODUCTION

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Writing the history of Rubens is an enterprise at once alluring and alarming.

He stands so high and his genius has so many different sides, that it may seem audacious to wish to scale his heights and follow him through all the vast domain over which he reigned. His thirst of creation was so unquenchable, his creative power so inexhaustible, that the attempt to give an account of all his productions would be a forlorn hope, and even if we confined ourselves to his most important works, there would still be the danger of wearying the reader. A further consideration is the fact that he was concerned in the most noteworthy events of his time; it is impossible to tell the story of his life without recounting the history of half Europe during a period of great agitation.

But the task is none the less fascinating. He is the greatest of the sons of his city and his country, one of the two or three greatest ever produced by his race. As a man, he was distinguished by the nobility of his character and the force of his intellect; as an artist, he was all powerful in his sphere. Privileged to be the heir of a long succession of masters of the brush, he possessed the most precious gifts of the Flemish genius to an incomparable degree; and his long and profound studies in the peninsula gave him a share in the artistic treasures which the Golden Age had accumulated in Italy. The gifts he drew from the two great sources of art he united in a harmonious combination, and made them his own by deeply imprinting upon them the seal of his own genius.

He transformed our national school, and dominated it throughout a whole century; his influence extended far beyond his own time and his own country. From the moment of his appearance down to the present day, he has remained a beacon, spreading his light far and wide; from generation to generation his creations have provided mankind with its noblest pleasures.

To pay homage to the immortal Fleming, to make him known in all his truth and in all his greatness, was a work which I judged worthy of the consecration of a life-time; I have devoted to it the best of my strength. I am convinced that much still remains to be done; but the moment seemed to have come for giving some arrangement to what we know of him.

In our days, information of all kinds about Rubens and his works has flowed in from various quarters; thanks to facility of communication and the numerous reproductions made



of his works, the enterprise, which at one time was beyond accomplishment, is not so to-day. Patient and minute examination of written documents has substituted truth for legend ; and the critical sense which has at last been aroused has applied its touch-stone to the opinions which preceding ages had handed on without verifying their worth.

I have attempted in previous works to contribute what I could towards assembling the materials for a history of the man of whom we heard so much and knew so little. My *Œuvre de Rubens*, my share in the *Correspondance de Rubens* and in the *Bulletin-Rubens* may be considered as preparatory works to the book which I lay before the public to-day. I have not thought it necessary to repeat here all the documents quoted in those works ; to have done so, moreover, would have been to swell this book to an excessive size. I have confined myself to referring the curious reader to the sources ; the word *Œuvre*, followed by a number, refers to the article so numbered in my *Œuvre de Rubens* ; the word *Correspondance* or merely the date of a letter, refers to the *Correspondance de Rubens*, edited by my late friend Charles Ruelens and myself.

MAX ROOSES.

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VIEW OF THE CITY OF ANTWERP IN 1610.

## CHAPTER I

# BIRTH OF RUBENS HIS CHILDHOOD AND APPRENTICESHIP

## A. BIRTH OF RUBENS

THE ANCESTORS OF RUBENS — HIS FATHER AND MOTHER — THE DATE OF HIS BIRTH —  
THE PLACE OF HIS BIRTH



NICOLAS RUBENS  
Drawing (Albertina, Vienna).

THE ANCESTORS OF RUBENS. — Peter Paul Rubens was descended from an Antwerp family, the earliest known representative of which is mentioned, in 1396, in the minutes of the proceedings of the aldermen of Antwerp, under the name of Arnold Rubbens. He married Catharina van den Elshoute, by whom he had a son, Jan Rubens, a tanner like his father. Jan married Margaretha van Catschote, and died before 1453, leaving three sons, of whom the eldest, Arnold, also a tanner, married Elizabeth De Herde. Their eldest son, Pieter, became a druggist and grocer, and married in 1499 Margaretha van Looveren. The eldest son of these last, Bartholomeus, druggist like his father and apothecary, was born in 1501 and married, in 1529, Barbe Arents, called Spierinck. He died in 1538, leaving an only son, Jan Rubens, the father of our Peter Paul. (1)

All these were burgesses, carrying on their trades for their own benefit ; all were owners of the house they lived in and possessors of other real property, the passing of which by sale or demise explains the appearance of their names in the minutes of the proceedings of the aldermen.

(1) FRÉDÉRIC VERACHTER : *Généalogie de Pierre-Paul Rubens et de sa famille*. Antwerp, De Lacroix, 1840.



Thus the first Arnold purchased, on the 31<sup>st</sup> August, 1396, a house in the Gasthuisstraat, and in the following year became proprietor of the moiety of some real estate which had belonged to his brother Wouter. On the 9<sup>th</sup> May, 1420, Jan Rubens, son of Arnold, bought an annual rent of 18 Brabant schellings gross. Two years later, he bought another house in the Gasthuisstraat. The second Arnold Rubens exchanged in 1453 an annual rent of 20 schellings gross, and gave a lease of a farm with a dwelling-house and lands situate outside the Kipdorp gate. In 1472, Pieter Rubens owned several houses conjointly with his brother Frans; his wife Margaretha van Looveren, brought him a dowry of 100 Flanders pounds gross. Bartholomeus Rubens acknowledges, in 1527, a debt of 640 Flanders *livres de gros* to the guardians of his brothers and sisters, after he had already paid what he owed them for their share in their father's business. In 1531 he bought yet another house on the canal near the Bridge of the Barrowmen (Kordewagenkruiersbrug).

These first generations wrote their name Rubbens or Ruebens. The latter orthography was still used by the father of our painter; his children were the first who signed ♀ Rubens ♂.

THE FATHER AND MOTHER OF RUBENS. — Jan Rubens, the father of Peter Paul, was born at Antwerp on the 13<sup>th</sup> March, 1530; he was eight years old when his father died, and nine when his mother, Barbe Arents, took as her second husband Jan de Lantmetere, grocer, whose brother Philip was an alderman and expert-syndic of the town. The household evidently lived in easy circumstances, for the son of the first marriage studied for the law. At the age of twenty he went to Padua, and travelled in Italy, ♀ in order to develop his mind and strengthen his judgment ♂, according to the author of the *Vita* (1). He stayed there seven years, and obtained, on the 13<sup>th</sup> November, 1554, the title of Doctor *in utroque jure* in the University of Rome (2). The *Vita* and the inscription on his tomb state that Jan Rubens lived in Italy for seven years. He had made his will at the time of his starting for Padua, on the 29<sup>th</sup> August, 1550, and did not return immediately after having passed his examination, not, in fact, till 1557. He set up in Antwerp as an advocate, and married on the 29<sup>th</sup> November, 1561, at the church of St James, Maria Pypelinckx, born in 1538, daughter of Hèndrik Pypelinckx and Clara de Tovion, called Colijns.

Though Jan Rubens was then only 31 years old, he had no doubt early won the esteem of his fellow-citizens, for he was elected alderman of the town on the 7<sup>th</sup> May, 1562. He held the office till the 30<sup>th</sup> May, 1568. In the interval four children had been born to him: Jan-Baptist, Blandina, Clara, and Hendrik.

During the first seven years of the married life of Jan Rubens, there broke out in the Low Countries the disorders which led to the Eighty Years' war, and of these Antwerp was the centre. Already, under the reign of Charles V and shortly after the first preachings of Luther, the religious reform had numbered adherents and martyrs in that town. The heavy hand of the

(1) *Vita Petri Pauli Rubenii*. In *Nouvelles Recherches sur Pierre-Paul Rubens, contenant une vie inédite de ce grand peintre par Philippe Rubens, avec des notes et des éclaircissements recueillis par le BARON DE REIFFENBERG*. Taken from Vol. X of the *Nouveaux Mémoires de l'Académie royale de Belgique*, Brussels, 1837, 4<sup>o</sup>.

(2) [J. SMIT EN VICTOR VAN GRIMBERGHE] : *Histortsche Levensbeschryving van P. P. Rubens*. Antwerp, L. J. de Cort, 1840, p. 359.

powerful emperor had stifled the progress of the new doctrine in his hereditary states; but after the accession of his son Philip, the situation changed. In his subjects in the Low Countries the new king inspired neither affection, nor the respect they had felt for his father. Charles V had favoured the Low Countries; his son favoured the Spaniards, and thereby gave offence to the great nobles, who were very powerful in our provinces, and who, though indifferent in the matter of religion, took sides with the Reformation through their hatred of a government of exclusively Catholic and Spanish sympathies. These powerful lords drew after them the lesser nobility, whose political influence had been markedly diminished, and the magistrates of the chief towns, whose trade and foreign relations had suffered greatly from the proclamations against the followers of the Reformation. From 1560 onwards the latter gained ground every day. They found encouragement and support in the progress made by their coreligionists in France and Germany. After the Lutherans, the Calvinists, the Anabaptists and a quantity of other sectaries came to swell the number of the innovators. Protestant preachings were publicly attended, and the governor, Margaret of Parma, found herself powerless to prevent an imminent upheaval. In 1566 the iconoclasts devastated the country. Then the king decided to have recourse to severer measures of repression, and sent the Duke of Alva to put them in force. He arrived in the month of August, 1567, rigorously carried the old proclamations into effect, and threw himself into new and implacable persecution of heretics and suspects.

The members of the lower classes, who had readily lent an ear to the Anabaptists and their promises to bring them a reign of peace and prosperity upon earth, were not the only ones threatened; there were many people of consideration who had embraced the doctrines of Luther or Calvin. In a list of the Antwerp Calvinists, compiled in 1566 by a partisan of Spain, we find, among a number of gentlemen, large merchants and foreigners of distinction, the name of « Master Jan Rubens, long an Alderman » (1). There is no possible occasion for calling in question the truth of the accusation formulated against him by this Catholic informer. His first will, made in 1550, opens with the usual formula, in which he commends his Soul to Almighty God, to Mary, his Blessed Mother, and to all the company of Heaven, and his dead body to consecrated ground » (2). But when, in 1562 or 1563, his wife and he made a new will, they both commend « their souls to Almighty God and their bodies to the place which may be settled upon. » They make none of the usual arrangements in favour of a particular church. (3). In a memorandum sent in 1578 to the Prince of Orange, Maria Pype-linckx represents to him that her husband had not been banished from the country, but had quitted it of his own free will at a time when the disorders that had agitated the Low Countries were more or less allayed, « and that because of his religion. » (4)

It is true that Jan Rubens sat as judge in many trials for heresy; but in those times it was one thing to adhere to a doctrine and another to profess it publicly. Brother-minor Jean Porthaise, « theologal of the church of Poitiers, » boasts, it is true, that, as the result of a public disputation held by himself and two other Catholic priests against several Lutheran

(1) *Bulletin des Archives anversoises*, IX, p. 419.

(2) P. GÉNARD : *Rubens*, p. 273.

(3) *Ibid.* p. 278.

(4) BAKHUIZEN VAN DEN BRINK : *Het Huwelijk van Willem van Oranje met Anna van Saxon*. P. 141.



preachers, he brought back into the Church • Monsieur Rubens, chief counsellor of Antwerp and the most learned Calvinist then in the Low Countries, • but no proof of this conversion can be discovered in any quarter.

After the arrival of the Duke of Alva in the Low Countries there was no longer any security for the partisans of the Reformation. From the autumn of 1567, when the condemnation of heretics by the dozen to capital punishment began, they emigrated to foreign countries in crowds. When in June, 1568, the Iron Duke had proved by the execution of Egmont and Hornes that he intended to spare no one, and his armies had defeated the insurgents on all



TWO YOUNG WOMEN — Drawing (Albertina). Study for *Thomyris and Cyrus* in the Earl of Darnley's collection.

sides, all whose consciences were not absolutely at rest found that a longer stay in their native country was becoming more and more dangerous. Jan Rubens was among them. After the excesses committed by the iconoclasts, Margaret of Parma had summoned the aldermen of the town of Antwerp to justify their conduct during the disorders ; and this they did in a document sent to the Governor on the 2<sup>nd</sup> August, 1567. The Duke of Alva took no account of their justification, and on the 14<sup>th</sup> of December, 1567, he demanded anew a written statement of the pleas they could put forward for their discharge ; in default of this, they were to present themselves before him in person to state their excuses. They sent their memorandum of justification to Brussels on the 8<sup>th</sup> January, 1568 ; it filled eighty-five pages and was based upon two hundred and ninety-three proofs of conviction. The Duke of Alva

handed the address to his confidential adviser, Ludovico del Rio, the most pitiless of the members of the committee on the troubles. Jan Rubens foresaw the consequences which these proceedings would have upon himself ; and, concerned for his personal safety, he sent, on the 11<sup>th</sup> January, a letter to Mr Jan Gillis, an official and counsellor of Antwerp, begging him to have his case pleaded before del Rio, and eventually to lay before him a memorandum in which the accused alderman undertook to justify himself. In this prolix document Rubens acknowledges that he is widely suspected, but affirms that the accusations formulated against him are devoid of all foundation and are the work of lying and revenge. He put no excessive reliance on the efficacy of this piece of pleading, and his distrust is not hard to understand. On the 24<sup>th</sup> September, 1568, the burgomaster of Antwerp, Antonius van Stralen, had been beheaded at Vilvorde ; the accusations brought against him were no graver than those that were hanging over Rubens ; and the evidence of the ecclesiastical authorities in his favour was no less conclusive than those that Rubens could invoke. His uneasiness about the fate that

awaited him increased from day to day; and a proof that it was not without foundation may be seen in the fact that he was one of the few excepted from the general amnesty granted by the Spanish government in 1574. (1) He lost no time. On the 1<sup>st</sup> October, 1668, he obtained a certificate from the chief magistrate of Antwerp, in which his colleagues bore witness that for several years and up till the preceding May he had sat on the bench of aldermen, and that his conduct had always been exemplary. (2)

Armed with this certificate, Jan Rubens left for Cologne with his wife and children, (3) obtained an authorization to set up his domicile in that town, and rented, at 266 thalers a year, a house situated in the small parish of St Martin in front of the presbytery. (4)

The value of his own declarations of orthodoxy and of that furnished him by his colleagues may be gauged by the evidence of the fact that in the same year, 1568, Jan Rubens is mentioned in the list of foreigners resident in Cologne as a former alderman of Antwerp who does not go to church. In the following year he is mentioned as a foreigner who does not follow Catholic practises. On these unfavourable reports, the magistrates summoned Rubens to furnish them with satisfactory explanations. This he did in April, 1569. None the less, notice was given him, on the 28<sup>th</sup> May in the following year, to leave the town in eight days. Thereupon he wrote two letters in succession to the communal council. In the first he affirms that he settled in Cologne



STUDY OF DRAPERY  
Drawing (Fodor Museum, Amsterdam).

with his family to work at his trade as also from other legitimate motives. In the second he declares that Her most Serene Highness the Princess of Orange was employing him in her affairs and her lawsuits, and had chosen him for her servant and counsellor in entrusting her children to his care. The town council was persuaded to allow Rubens, in consideration of his

(1) *Exemplarys oft copie van den opene Briefffen van onss Heeren des Coninx by dewelcke syn Majesteyt gunt ende verleent gratie en de generael pardon*. Brussels, Michael van Hamont, 1574.

(2) DIERCKXSENS : *Antverpia Christo nascens*. IV, p. 354. — F. JOS. VAN DEN BRANDEN : *Geschiedenis der Antwerpsche Schilderschool*, p. 361.

(3) According to an extract from the parish registers of Gors-op-Leeuw (Limbourg in Belgium), Maria Pypelinckx stood god-mother at that place to a little cousin of her husband's on the 1<sup>st</sup> September 1568 (GENARD : *Rubens*, p. 292). She must have left Antwerp before her husband and stopped on the way between Antwerp and Cologne.

(4) Dr L. ENNEN : *Ueber den Geburtsort des Peter Paul Rubens*. Cologne, 1861, pp. 13, 43, 53, 55.

employment in connection with the princess and her children, to reside in Cologne on condition of furnishing before Michaelmas the proof of his orthodoxy. He did so, and was enrolled on the list of foreigners authorized to reside in the town.

But a misfortune greater than expulsion from the town was reserved for him and his family. According to his own evidence, he had been, since 1570, legal adviser and confidential servant to the princess of Orange, Anne of Saxony, daughter of the Elector Maurice, who was married to William of Orange in 1561 and had borne him three children: Maurice, the future Stadtholder, Anne and Emilia. When in 1567 the prince left our country to go and seek aid in Germany against the Spanish arms, his wife settled at Cologne. There she chose as her attorney Jan Bets, an advocate of Mechlin, who had played an important part in the recent troubles. She charged him to see that from the general confiscation of her husband's goods those were excepted which served as security for her personal income. Then she reinforced him by appointing Jan Rubens her deputy legal adviser, and he took his colleague's place during the numerous journeys which Bets was obliged to make. (1) He succeeded in gaining the confidence of the princess so completely that he became her habitual companion, and when, in 1570, she transferred her residence to Siegen, a little town in the duchy of Nassau, about fifty miles west of Cologne, she left two of her children with him, in the great house called Wolfershof, which he had just rented, and in which she herself appears to have lived during her stay in Cologne.

Anne of Saxony was a detestable woman, and at Siegen as at Cologne she was far from amending her ways. Her nature was frivolous and her conduct disorderly. To her numerous faults she added finally drunkenness and licentiousness. Her accomplice in adultery was no other than her adviser and lawyer, Jan Rubens. She kept him to dinner at Siegen every day; and considering the sensuality of her character, there is nothing surprising in the fact that this intimacy soon brought them into guilty relations. On the 22<sup>nd</sup> August, 1571, she gave birth prematurely to a sickly child, which her husband refused to acknowledge. In March of the same year, while Jan Rubens was going from Cologne to Siegen, he was seized on his way by order of John of Nassau and the prince of Orange and confined in the castle of Dillenburg, which lay between twelve and thirteen miles to the south-west on the summit of a hill, and had been the birth-place of William the Silent. The news was soon spread abroad, and great was the scandal it caused.

The German law punished adultery with death, and we can understand how embittered William of Orange must have been against his wife and her accomplice. A more deplorable spectacle cannot be imagined. While the noble and heroic prince was employing every means for the realisation of his great scheme, and sacrificing his money and his blood to the public good, while he was wandering indefatigably from country to country to enlist his forces, his wife, the daughter of one of the German Electors, was leading a life of debauchery and infamy. Her lover was equally devoid of any interesting qualities. This alderman of the town of Antwerp, who could change his religion as circumstances demanded, had succumbed to the allurements of a dissolute nature without grace or beauty, and forgotten his duty to the wife and four

(1) BAKHUIZEN VAN DEN BRINK: *Op. cit.* p. 135.



children with whom he had started on the road to exile. It is clear that this unsuitable pair could not count on the pity of the husband nor on that of his brother, the lord of the country. However, the life of Jan Rubens was spared, no doubt for political reasons, but they exacted a rigorous expiation of his offence in not having resisted the seductions of the princess. But for the generosity of an angel who watched over him, he might never, perhaps, have crossed the threshold of his prison again. That angel was no other than his wife Maria Pypelinckx, whom we see entering on the tragic opening of her illustrious son's history in a glory of self-sacrifice and virtue.

We only know her from the part she played and from the letters she wrote in the painful circumstances that followed the arrest of her husband and in the course of the twelve years of struggle and anguish that lay before her ; but those who were in relation to her in her everyday life never speak of Rubens's mother but with the highest praise. After the death of her son Philip, his brother-in-law, Jan Brant, devoted to him a bibliographical notice, and Jan Woverius, the friend of Philip and Peter Paul sent the latter a letter of condolence. In eulogizing the dead, both found it necessary to pay homage to his mother also. The former calls her « a woman intelligent and distinguished » (1), and the latter « a woman exalted above her sex by her intelligence, and almost more than a mother in her love for her children. » (2)

We can easily understand the state she was in during the first days that followed the arrest of her husband. In her anxiety she wrote letter after letter to Anne of Saxony, and sent two messengers in succession with instructions to bring her news of her husband. More than three weeks passed before she was made acquainted with her double misfortune and knew that her husband had been immured in a dungeon and was in danger of his life, and that she had no less cause of complaint against him than the prince himself, whose vengeance had just overtaken him. Once assured of the dreadful truth, she wrote a letter of pardon to her husband on the 28<sup>th</sup> March ; four days later, she wrote him two more letters, to cheer him and assure him that her love for him would always be the same and that she would do what she could to release him from his painful situation. Her loving and generous nature shows clearly in her letters. Her sentiments and her words are so tender and touching, that never were grief and resignation more eloquent than when they flowed, on the 1<sup>st</sup> April, 1571, from the pen, « without art nor learning, » of this afflicted wife and mother. The letters must be read to understand what an incomparable woman was the mother of Rubens, and how such a mother could give birth to such a son.

The history of more than one great man shows that he owed the best in him to his mother. What we know of Maria Pypelinckx justifies us in saying that this was the case with her illustrious son. In the few written pages she has left us, she paints the most tragic situation in the most striking manner ; that is just what Rubens did in the works which are the loftiest expression of his originality. Just as she, in the simplicity of her humble heart, puts into words the torrents of anguish that oppress her, so her son, in his resplendent career, painted, with

(1) Prudentissima et lectissima fœmina (J. Brant, Biography of Philip Rubens in *Asterii Homiliæ*).

(2) Hanc supra sexum prudentem, pæne supra matrem vestrorum amantem. (J. Woverius in *Consolatio ad P. P. Rubenium*, *Ibid.*).

an ability purified by study, the most nerving dramas in the history of the world. It was from his mother that he inherited this elevation of mind, the depth of sentiment and the power of expression which enabled him to represent with the utmost eloquence the emotions most apt to make a forcible impression on the human soul.

Jan Rubens had written to his wife for the first time on the 28<sup>th</sup> March ; on the same day, before receiving his missive, she sent him a long letter, in which she forgave him and endeavoured to console him. On the 1<sup>st</sup> April, immediately on the receipt of his letter, she replied (1) :

» My dear and beloved husband, I have received your letter of the 1<sup>st</sup> April and I see that  
 » you have a great desire to receive my news, which I was sure you would. That is why on



VIEW OF THE CASTLE OF DILLENBURG IN THE XVI CENTURY.

» the same day 28<sup>th</sup> March on which you wrote to me I sent you a long letter by a certain  
 » messenger, who went down thither with Raymond. (2) I hope you have received it, and that  
 » it has given you every satisfaction on the subject of the forgiveness you ask me for, which  
 » I grant you now once again, and will ever grant you when you ask it of me, but on one  
 » condition that you will love me as you used — without demanding any other satisfac-  
 » tion from you but the giving of that love, for if I have that, the rest cannot fail to follow. It  
 » gave me great joy to receive news of you, for my heart was torn with uneasiness and  
 » anxiety at our being so far from one another. I had drawn up a petition too, and I was very  
 » anxious for Raymond to undertake to send it in immediately, but he thought that it would  
 » be better to wait until your messenger brought us some news ; as soon as I know how  
 » your affairs go, I will beg him to go at once and present it in my name, which he will do, I  
 » hope. God grant it may have the effect I desire ! But, alas ! I have written it without art nor  
 » learning ; I have simply expressed my desire as well as I could ; for I have not told your  
 » story to a living soul, so that the secret may be kept on our side at least ; and so I asked  
 » help of no one, but helped myself as best I could. That will suffice, I hope, if God grants  
 » us his grace and deigns to make our rulers have compassion on us, as I hope he will : our

(1) BAKHUIZEN VAN DEN BRINK : Op. cit. p. 163.

(2) Reymont Reyngodt (Reingot, Ringott, Reynont, Ringout), an apothecary, and a relative of Maria Pypelinckx, with whom she went to live later. He was a Calvinist who, like the Rubens family, had left Antwerp for Cologne. BAKHUIZEN VAN DEN BRINK : *Les Rubens à Siegen*, p. XLIII, 54. ENNEN : *Ueber den Geburtsort*, pp. 46, 79, 80.

» little children pray two or three times a day for you, that the Lord may bring you back to  
 » us very soon. As to explaining away your absence, it is too late for that, for it is very generally  
 » known, not here only but at Antwerp and everywhere, where you are, but no one knows  
 » why and we explain it as we agreed with Raymond, and we give hopes that you will soon  
 » come home again, which has helped much to stop the gossip. I have written also as  
 » pertinently as I could to our relatives, who like all our friends have been plunged into the  
 » deepest grief by letters from other people, and will never be reassured until they hear the  
 » news of your return home. You advise me also in your letters to show no dismay nor sorrow,  
 » but that I have found quite impossible, for dismay and sorrow have never left me for an



VIEW OF THE TOWN OF SIEGEN IN THE XVI CENTURY

» instant and as they say : feigning gladness in sadness is the worst of pain. However I do all  
 » I can, and as I never leave the house I am little seen, and to the people who visit me I  
 » explain that my grief comes from the rumours that are spread about you. She goes on in  
 this strain for some time, and ends with these words :

« And so I pray you to seek your consolation in the Lord, as I myself do, and  
 » to recommend yourself to him. I have a sure hope that he will not condemn me to such  
 » a sad separation, for the trial would be more cruel than I could bear with resignation.  
 » My heart is so sore that I greatly fear that cross would be too heavy for me ; therefore  
 » I pray the Lord God to spare it me. I recommend you to him, and the little children  
 » and I recommend ourselves to your good grace ».

This letter had not been dispatched when Maria Pypelinckx received another from the prisoner, to which she replied in still more touching terms :

« Dear and beloved husband, after I had written you the enclosed letter, the messenger  
 » we had sent to you arrived, bringing me a letter from you, which gave me joy because  
 » I see from it that you are satisfied with my forgiveness. I never thought you would have  
 » believed that there would be any difficulty about that from me, for in truth I made none.  
 » How could I have the heart to be angry with you in such peril, when I would give my life  
 » to save you if it were possible? And were it not so, how could so much hatred have  
 » succeeded so quickly to our long affection, as to make it impossible for me to pardon a



slight trespass against myself, when I have to pray God to forgive me the many grave  
 trespasses I commit against him every day, assuring him that I myself forgive them that have  
 trespassed against me? I should be like the wicked steward, whose master had forgiven him  
 so many heavy debts, and who himself demanded that his brother should pay him a very  
 small debt to the uttermost farthing. Be assured, then, that I have forgiven you completely!  
 Please God that may suffice to set you free! We should soon have cause to rejoice; but  
 I find nothing in your letter to console me, for it has broken my heart by showing me  
 that you have lost courage and speak as if you were on the point of death. I am so  
 troubled that I know not what I am writing. One would think that I desired your death;  
 since you ask me to accept it in expiation. Alas, how you hurt me by saying that! In truth,  
 it passes my endurance. If there is no more pity, where shall I find a refuge? Where must  
 » I seek it? I will ask it of Heaven with tears and cries. I hope still that the Lord will  
 hear me, that he will soften the hearts of these princes, that they may hear our prayers and  
 have pity upon me; if not they will surely kill me in putting you to death; for I should die  
 of grief, and my heart would cease to beat at the moment when I heard the fatal news.

And further on, in the midst of calmer passages, there comes a fresh outburst of transports  
 of grief, the tragic form of which recalls the accents of the psalms sung in the reformed church.

My heart cannot bow to the idea that our sad and cruel separation can be final, for  
 I looked for it so little on the day when you went away. My God! I could not survive it!  
 » My soul is so bound up and made one with yours, that you cannot suffer but I must  
 suffer as much. Methinks if these good lords could see my tears they would have pity upon  
 me, even were they of wood or stone, and therefore, were there no more hope, I should try  
 this last resource, even should you write to me not to do so. Alas! it is not justice that  
 we ask, it is pity, and if we can by no means obtain it, what shall we do! O heavenly  
 Father, father of mercy, deign to aid me! Thou desirest not the death of a sinner, but rather  
 that he should be converted and live! Oh! send forth thy mercy upon the soul of these  
 » good lords whom we have so heavily offended, that we may soon be delivered from this  
 great pain and sorrow! For thou seest how long it has endured!

And after the date: » Written this first of April between midnight and one o' clock »,  
 there follows this last word, aglow, for all its simplicity, with nobility and greatness of soul:  
 » And say no more: » your unworthy husband »: for all is forgiven ».

Maria Pypelinckx tried to set her husband free, even when all hope seemed lost, and as  
 she had expected, the princes had pity on her. But that not without trouble nor immediately.  
 She began by writing letter after letter to John of Nassau, to William of Orange and Juliana his  
 mother. Then she went in person to Dillenburg, had an interview with the prince, wrote to  
 him again, went to see him once more, and threatened to spread the whole story and make  
 her sorrows a reproach to the house of Nassau. After two years of importunities, of entreaties  
 and threats, she ended by winning a partial success. Her husband, however, was far from  
 receiving complete liberty. He was compelled to settle at Siegen and to undertake upon oath,  
 not to leave the town, except to take a walk in the neighbourhood under the escort of one of  
 the prince's servants. He was forbidden to appear in church, and ordered to confess his crime  
 and to undertake to return to prison at the first summons. The slightest infraction of these

engagements was to result in death and the confiscation of all his goods. Maria Pypelinckx was to go bail in 6000 thalers on which the prince was to pay her interest, and which were to be returned to her on the death of her husband or his return to prison without having broken the prescribed undertakings. On the 10<sup>th</sup> May, 1573, the day of Pentecost, Jan Rubens left prison to enjoy the half-liberty which set a sword of Damocles continually hanging over his head, and went to occupy with his family the dwelling which his wife had prepared for him at Siegen.

The little town in which Rubens's parents thus took up their abode, and where he himself was born, is situated in the county of Siegen, of which it is the capital. It belonged to the house of Nassau, and continued to belong to it till 1806. Since 1815 it has been annexed to Prussia. To-day it contains some twenty thousand inhabitants. It stands on an eminence which dominates a group of hills; the road from Betzdorff winds across a pleasantly undulating country; but the metal industry has terribly ravaged these once peaceful valleys, and among the mountains still covered with meadows and woods rise others barren and bare, built of the slag from the mines. In 1570 the town was still encircled by walls, set at intervals with round towers. It rose on the side of a gently sloping hill, crowned with a strong castle. In these latter days, a street of shops has risen connecting the town with the station, which lies in the valley; but it is still easy to see what Siegen was like in the sixteenth century. At the ancient entrance stands a castle which has kept but little of its original form. Beyond it the old street climbs the hill. From both sides run alleys, none of them wide enough to allow two people to walk abreast. The appearance is that of a small provincial town, irregularly and casually built, like the villages in mountainous countries, where streets and houses are arranged as best they can be according to the lie of the ground. The front and side faces of the houses are generally covered with slate, and dress their gables in monotonous lines. Half way up the hill, in the centre of the town, rises the old church, in the pointed style, now mutilated and completely spoiled. Higher up, at the top of the hill, stands the mediaeval castle, still forbidding in appearance but much ruined. Between the castle and the church runs the Bourgstrasse, flanked by a few patrician houses, modest enough, but rather larger and of a better exterior than the other dwellings in the town. In one of these houses, according to local tradition, Jan Rubens and Maria Pypelinckx took up their abode; but it is not known for certain in which. True, it is held that it was one of the most considerable; but the financial condition of the family was no longer so favourable as to allow a large sum to be set aside for rent.

During their residence in Siegen, Maria Pypelinckx tried on several occasions to obtain full and complete liberty for her husband. Not till after a lapse of five years, in 1578, were her efforts crowned with success. On the 15<sup>th</sup> May of that year, after the death of Anne of Saxony, when William of Orange had been living happily with a new companion for two years, the Antwerp lawyer at last obtained an authorization to go and live where he liked, on condition that he should not settle in the prince's possessions nor in the hereditary dominions of the Low Countries. He was once more strictly enjoined never to show himself to the eyes of the prince. The pair were compelled to leave the 6000 thalers in the hands of the landgrave as security for the faithful execution by Rubens of the conditions imposed upon him; but they

had already renounced one half of the sum to obtain his conditional liberty, and Jan Rubens had sacrificed another 1400 thalers without his wife's knowledge. Nevertheless the count reserved the right to recall Rubens at any moment, and to dispose of him according to his good pleasure (1). The family then settled in Cologne. During their residence in Siegen Jan Rubens and his wife had belonged to the Lutheran persuasion. In 1582 they had not yet left it. Their sons Philip and Peter Paul were therefore baptized according to the rites of that



MARKET-PLACE, SIEGEN

persuasion. It was not till later that the parents returned within the pale of the Catholic church.

During the first years of their stay in the archiepiscopal town, their existence was precarious. Their fortune had been sacrificed in order to obtain the release of the husband ; the 300 thalers to which they were entitled as interest on the security they had deposited, were irregularly paid, and the blow of the possible imprisonment of Jan Rubens was constantly hanging over them. It actually fell, in fact, in 1582. In September of that year, Count John informed him that he must betake himself to Siegen on the 1<sup>st</sup> November and put himself at the prince's disposition. Maria Pypelinckx once more intervened in favour of her husband ; new offers of money were made, and procured for Jan Rubens, on the 10<sup>th</sup> January, 1583, a

(1) AUG. SPIESS : *Eine Episode aus dem Leben der Eltern von P. P. Rubens*. Dillenburg, 1873.



deed of full and complete release (1). He was then able to start work afresh on his professional occupations, and was employed in important matters as adviser and agent. Two letters have been preserved, one of the 13<sup>th</sup> August 1580, and one of the 12<sup>th</sup> March, 1583, written to Jan Rubens by Prince Charles de Croy. They show the high esteem in which the great noble held the lawyer. In the first of these letters he invites him to his wedding at Aix, in the second he rejects the advice which Rubens had given him to make his peace with the king of Spain (2).



BURGSTRASSE, SIEGEN

Jan Rubens died at Cologne on the 1<sup>st</sup> May, 1587; on the 27<sup>th</sup> June following Maria Pypelinckx obtained a certificate of irreproachable conduct, evidently with the intention of returning to Antwerp.

Of the four children who had accompanied her to Cologne, the youngest, Hendrik, born in 1567, died in 1583. The eldest was Jan-Baptist, born at Antwerp in 1562. The question has been raised whether the latter was a painter or not, and it is an important one, for if it is answered in the affirmative, we should find in Rubens's own family a predecessor and

(1) AUG. SPIESS : *Mitteilungen über die Familie Rubens*, p. 33.

(2) J. SMIT EN VAN GRIMBERGHIEN : *Op. cit.*, p. 375.

perhaps a guide for the young artist. In a list of the inhabitants of the Breitstrasse in Cologne drawn up in 1583 we find this item: — Johan Robins, Windeck (the name of one of the quarters of the town) und Johan Robins filius (son) Malergaffel (painter) — Ennen rightly concludes from this that Rubens's elder brother was a painter.

Another fact confirms this opinion. Some evidence quoted by Mr F. Jos. van den Branden mentions the departure of Peter Paul's brother for Italy in 1586 (1). It is not stated, but there is good ground for supposing, that in this he conformed to the custom of the painters of this time. We may quote further a letter from Andreas Hoyas to Valerius Andreas, dated the 2<sup>nd</sup> March, 1609, in which he says: For several years my son Philip has been devoting himself to drawing and painting; he has visited Paris. Though he is in a condition to gain his living with ease, I have thought of allowing him to leave here. I thought of Baptist Rubens. Find out if he takes pupils to instruct them in the secrets of his art and let me know (2). Note that probably there is no question here of Jan-Baptist Rubens, who was dead at this time.

Finally there is a letter of the 5<sup>th</sup> October, 1611, in which the elders of the council of Nuremberg inform Jan Löw, the agent of their town at Prague, that a picture by Jan Rubens of Antwerp has been pledged for eight hundred thalers with one of their fellow-citizens, Friedrich van Falckenburg (3). But his name is not mentioned either in the registers of the Guild of St Luke, or in other documents. It may not be decisively proved that Rubens's elder brother practised the art of painting, but the fact is none the less highly probable. If we had certain knowledge that he wielded the brush, we could not doubt that he could have and must have exercised his influence in the choice of the career embraced by his younger brother.

According to Verachter, Jan-Baptist Rubens died in 1600, but Génard has found his name mentioned in a deed drawn up by the bench of aldermen of the town of Antwerp on the 6<sup>th</sup> September, 1601, in which Philip Rubens and his mother appear both in their own names and in those of Jan-Baptist Rubens and his sister Blandina.

The latter was born at Antwerp on the 12<sup>th</sup> May, 1564. On the 25<sup>th</sup> August, 1590, she married Simeon du Parcq. She died on the 23<sup>rd</sup> April, 1606.

The two other children who had accompanied the family to Cologne died before their father. Clara, born at Antwerp on the 17<sup>th</sup> November, 1565, died at Lierre on the 15<sup>th</sup> September, 1580; Hendrik, born in 1567, died at Cologne in 1583.

After the release of Jan Rubens, his family was increased by three more sons: Philip, born in 1573, Peter Paul in 1577 and Bartholomeus in 1581. The last died while still an infant in Cologne, his native town. Of the place of birth of the two others there is some question. Philip Rubens is said to have been born at Cologne on the 27<sup>th</sup> April, 1574. When, on the 14<sup>th</sup> January, 1609, he obtained the freedom of the city of Antwerp he was entered on the registers of the population under the name of Master Philip Rubens, son of Jan, born at Cologne. The Rubens family always systematically avoided mentioning their residence at

(1) F. JOS. VAN DEN BRANDEN: *Geschiedenis der Antwerpsche Schilderschool*, P. 380.

(2) *Correspondance de Rubens*, I, p. XII.

(3) Königliches Kreisarchiv zu Nürnberg. Printed in *Jahrbuch der Kunsthistorischen Sammlungen des Allerhöchsten Kaiserhauses*, Vienna 1889. X. p. LIX, no 5915.

Siegen and the circumstance which caused it. Thus the certificate brought to Antwerp by Maria Pypelinckx states that she had lived at Cologne from 1569 to 1587; thus again Jan Rubens's epitaph in the church of St Peter in Cologne affirms that he had lived in that town for nineteen years; the principal deeds relating to the affairs of the family are dated from Cologne, and thus, finally, Philip Rubens is stated in an authentic document to have been born in that town.

THE BIRTH OF RUBENS. -- And Peter Paul, where and when was he born? It is a singular thing that information concerning the date of his birth is extremely scarce. His portrait published in 1649 by Jan Meyssens states that he was born on the 28<sup>th</sup> June, 1577 (1). This date is repeated by BELLORI, *Vite de' Pittori* (Rome, 1672); MORERI, *Grand dictionnaire historique* (Lyons, 1674); SANDRART, *Tentsche Academie* (Nürnberg, 1675); BALDINUCCI, *Notizie dei professori del disegno* (1681); FLORENT LE COMTE, *Cabinet des Singularitez* (1699); HOUBRAKEN, *Groote Schonburgh* (1718); DESCAMPS, *Vie des peintres* (1753).

That day is the eve of the feast of SS. Peter and Paul; and hence it was early said and repeated that he owed his name to the Saints celebrated the day after his birth, that is to say the day of his baptism. The first to hazard this suggestion was ISAAC BULLART, *Académie des Sciences et des Arts* (1682). He was followed by FÉLIBIEN, *Entretiens sur les vies et les ouvrages des plus excellents peintres* (Paris, 1688); CAMPO WEYERMAN, *Levensbeschrijvingen* (1729); D'ARGENVILLE, *Abrégé de la vie des plus fameux peintres* (Paris, 1745); MICHEL, *Histoire de la vie de Rubens* (Brussels, 1771). And therefore, precisely on account of this coincidence, the accuracy of the information has been called in question, and attempts have been made to prove it legendary, because it contradicted the hypothesis that held Rubens to have been born at Antwerp. But Meyssens is alone in indicating precisely the date of the birth, and the evidence of the same nature which we find under the portraits of other painters born at Antwerp proves that he was not speaking at random. Thus he states that Vandyck was born on the 22<sup>nd</sup> March, 1599; Adriaan van Utrecht on the 12<sup>th</sup> January in the same year; Jordaens on the 19<sup>th</sup> May, 1594 (read 1593); Erasmus Quellin on the 19<sup>th</sup> November, 1607; Peter de Jode, the younger, on the 22<sup>nd</sup> November, 1606. Every time he gives a date we find it to be accurate, which proves that he drew on trustworthy sources. Why should his information concerning Rubens be an exception to this rule?

We find a second indication of the date of the birth of Peter Paul Rubens in a letter from the artist himself. On the 25<sup>th</sup> July, 1627, he writes to George Geldorp: -- I have great affection for the town of Cologne because it was there that I was brought up until my tenth year. The certificate given to Maria Pypelinckx by the magistrate of Cologne is dated the 27<sup>th</sup> June 1587 (2). Admitting that she left the town soon after, Rubens's statement is exact. We must add, however, that in a document printed by van den Branden (3) three worthies of Antwerp

(1) -- Antwerp is the town of that happy birth, the 28<sup>th</sup> June, 1577

(2) ENNEN: *Op. cit.* p. 81.

(3) *Geschiedenis der Antwerpsche Schilderschool*, p. 380.



declare on the 29<sup>th</sup> November, 1589, that Maria Pypelinckx arrived from Cologne with three children to settle in their town & three quarters of a year ago. According to this declaration, the family only returned to Antwerp eighteen months after obtaining the certificate. Rubens, then, would have been eleven and a half at the moment of his departure from Cologne; but as he was persuaded that his mother had left that town in 1587, he must have also believed that he was ten years old at that date.

The third proof that can be summoned to fix the date of Rubens's birth is his epitaph, where we read that he died on the 31<sup>th</sup> May, 1640, aged 64 years (obiit anno Sal<sup>s</sup> M.DC.XLXXX



VENUS SUCKLING THE LOVES  
(After an engraving by Corn. Galle)

May ætatis LXIV). If he was 64 in 1640 he must have been born not in 1577 but in 1576. A mistake about Rubens's age, therefore, has crept into this inscription. He was not sixty-four but sixty-three when he died. It must be noted that the stone bearing this epitaph was not erected till 1755 by a descendant of Rubens, Canon Jan-Baptist van Parijs. It is true that in his *Vie de Rubens* published in 1767 F. Basan gives another version of the inscription: 'He died in 1640 aged 63 years' (1); but it is true also that Basan had not seen the tomb. De Piles, on the other hand, gives from the epitaph which was drawn up by Gevartius immediately after the death of Rubens to be engraved on his tomb, a reading which agrees with that placed there by Canon van Parijs.

The life of Rubens written in Latin by his nephew Philip Rubens, says that he was born in 1577 at Cologne, whence he went to Antwerp with his mother in 1587. De Piles, who took his information from the author of this life, says the same thing. In a deed drawn up by the notary Jan Nicolai, on the 28<sup>th</sup> August, 1618, Rubens states that he is forty-one years old (2). Except the inscription on the tomb, therefore, we possess no original evidence that contradicts the precise indication on the portrait published by Jan Meyssens: and we have no serious reason for questioning its accuracy.

THE BIRTH-PLACE OF RUBENS. — If we could thus decide the question of the date, that of the place would be settled with it. We know, as a fact, on good authority that Maria

(1) Obit anno sal. M.DC.XL, ætatis LXIII. (F. BASAN: *Catalogue des Estampes gravées d'après P. P. Rubens*, Paris, 1767 p. lii.)

(2) F. JOS. VAN DEN BRANDEN: *Op. cit.* p. 371.



Portrait of a Man  
(Albertina, Vienna)









Pypelinckx was at Siegen on the 28<sup>th</sup> June, 1677, and if her illustrious son was born on that day, he was born in that town. Some authorities, however, maintain that Rubens was born at Antwerp, and in order to make their system tenable they claim that the day of his birth did not fall in June, 1577. Hence, in enquiring into the question of the birth-place, we must consider once more that of the date.

Discussion about Rubens's birth-place has been long and warmly waged. In itself, the question is not of great importance. However it may be settled, Rubens is none the less of Antwerp blood. By his art as much as by his birth he belongs to the school of Antwerp. At Antwerp he lived, studied, and worked ; that town had the largest share of the pleasure which his art procured for the human race ; she reaped all the glory which a great man can diffuse over his native place ; throughout a whole century her artists drew their inspiration from the abundant spring which he had set flowing. There is only one city of Rubens in the world, and that is Antwerp. The title and the glory are contested by none. The rest is but accessory and futile in the face of this undeniable truth.

But history has her exigencies ; and the moment the question is raised it becomes necessary to deal with it. It is impossible to write the biography of the master without examining once again the briefs and pleadings of both parties. We will condense their arguments as closely as possible, confining ourselves to what is absolutely indispensable.

The question is no new one, but it had been long at rest when in 1853 it was stated anew and debated with heat.

In the life-time of Rubens or soon after his decease, two different opinions were put forward concerning his birth-place. Jan Meyssens pronounced for Antwerp, while the author of the *Vita* said : Jan Rubens settled at Cologne, where our Peter Paul was born. The first of these statements was repeated by Bellori, Moreri and Sandart, who followed Meyssens on this point as they had on the date. The opinion of the author of the *Vita*, who declares for Cologne, is shared by de Piles, Baldinucci, Bullart, Houbraken, Descamps and subsequent writers.

To the general public of Rubens's own time he was an Antwerp painter and consequently had been born at Antwerp. In the patent of nobility granted him in 1630 by Charles I he is styled of Antwerp by birth. On the 28<sup>th</sup> August, 1618, he countersigns a deed before the notary Jan Nicolaï in which he styles himself, at the same time as two other painters, Jan Breughel and Hendrik van Balen, as citizen and inhabitant of Antwerp, without alluding to any circumstance which could bring this qualification into question.



HOLY FAMILY  
Drawing (British Museum, London).



But his family was better informed. When Philip Rubens wished to be appointed secretary of the town of Antwerp, he had first of all to obtain citizenship. In the application which he addressed to the Estates of Brabant in 1606, he says : — that it happened also that the father of the applicant resided for some time at Cologne where he had by his wife several children of whom the applicant was one. — (1) In granting naturalization to Philip the Estates of Brabant made use of the same expressions. When, on the 14<sup>th</sup> January, 1609, he obtained the right of citizenship in Antwerp, he was entered in the rolls as : — Master Philip Rubens, son of Jan, born at Cologne. (2) The deed of naturalization granted five days later by the Archduke equally mentions his birth in the German town ; and this circumstance is also recorded in his biography by Jan Brant his brother-in-law. A fact acknowledged so often and so publicly in the case of Philip, his family neither ought nor wished to conceal when it was a question of Peter Paul. They acknowledged Cologne, but not Siegen. The former of these towns recalled a sorrow, the latter a disgrace : there must be no allusion to the events of Dillenburg and Siegen, which awoke so many painful and unmentionable recollections. Therefore they never mentioned the town in which Jan Rubens had lived with his wife after his imprisonment and before his return to Cologne. It was in the same train of thought that Maria Pypelinckx carved on her husband's tomb the statement that for nineteen years she had lived without the least disagreement in the town of Cologne with her most kind husband. In the same way again, the certificate which the magistrate of the town gave her on the 27<sup>th</sup> June, 1587, bore witness that during all that time she had lived in Cologne with her husband. Pious lies, inspired by the most praiseworthy of sentiments, veiled the whole of that story for more than two centuries and a half. Those who had invented them and maintained them were able to imagine that the famous secret would be buried with them. They were wrong. From several documents produced by Robert Fruin it is clear that even in Rubens's life-time Anne of Saxony's guilt had transpired. Constantine Huygens among others says in his anecdotes : — Prince Maurice and the painter Rubens were both the sons of Anne of Saxony, wife of Prince William. — (3) Tradition, as we see, had altered the story and attached a legend to the life of two celebrated men. The legend, like the facts, had long been forgotten when the latter came suddenly to light again.

Towards the middle of our century Bakhuizen van den Brink, keeper of the archives of the realm of the Low Countries, in searching among the papers of the house of Orange in order to find materials for the history of the marriage of Anne of Saxony, laid his hand on the letters of Maria Pypelinckx, Jan Rubens, Count John of Nassau, and all who had been concerned in the affair. He reconstructed the arrest of Jan Rubens, the lovable and radiant figure of his wife and all the dramatic story related above. In proposing to clear up an episode in the life of William the Silent, the great statesman, he discovered documents which cast a new and brilliant light on the history of the greatest of the Flemish painters. In 1853 he published his : *History of the marriage of William of Orange with Anne of Saxony examined from an historical*

(1) DUMORTIER : *Recherches*, p. 70.

(2) GÉNARD : *Rubens*, p. 11.

(3) *Nederlandsche Spectator*, 13th October, 1877.

and critical point of view, and from that moment the tradition, till then generally accepted, which made Cologne the birth-place of Rubens, was shaken. But Cologne did not resign the throne without a struggle. In 1861 the keeper of her archives, Herr Dr L. Ennen, published a work entitled : *Ueber den Geburtsort des Peter Paul Rubens, mit Beilagen*, (On the Birth-place of Peter Paul Rubens, with appendices), in which he supports the old tradition with historical documents, and defies the author of the *Marriage of William of Orange* to prove his allegation point by point by means of authentic evidence. In the same year, on the challenge of the last named work, a champion of the long neglected pretensions of the town of Antwerp entered the lists in the person of Barthélémy Dumortier (1). It is true that in 1840 Victor van Grimbergen, in his new edition of the translation of the *Vie de Rubens* by Michel, had maintained the same opinion ; but his voice had found little echo. Among the documents printed by Dr Ennen, Dumortier had found a deed proving, according to him, that Maria Pypelinckx had given birth to Rubens neither at Cologne nor at Siegen, but at Antwerp. With this document he compared the statements contemporary with Rubens, which in his opinion corroborated it, and concluded that it was thenceforth an established fact that the great painter was born on the banks of the Scheldt. Bakhuizen van den Brink replied to his two opponents and produced new documents in support of his assertions (2). Dumortier published a new pamphlet in which he defended his opinion more insistently than before, and he was supported in his plea for Antwerp by the learned publications of the keeper and sub-keeper of the archives of that town (3). Many others took part in the debate, and if the question was not decided to everybody's satisfaction, it was at least elucidated and amply illustrated. Dr Ennen considered himself beaten, and paid to Siegen the honour which he was obliged to renounce for Cologne. We need not concern ourselves therefore with the pretensions of the latter town, and can confine our discussion to those of Antwerp and Siegen.

Bakhuizen van den Brink and Dr Ennen have published documents which prove that Jan Rubens and Maria Pypelinckx lived in Siegen from 1573 to 1578 ; that is a fact which can no longer be contested. There are two pieces of evidence extant, which are of considerable interest in fixing the birth-place of Rubens. The first is a letter from his father to Count John of Nassau, in which he asks authority to go to Cologne in order to give a power of attorney to enter into possession of the property which had been seized after his departure from Antwerp and had been restored to him in accordance with the Pacification of Ghent and its ratification by Philip II on the 12<sup>th</sup> February, 1577. This letter was written in April, 1577 ; it bears no date, but a clerk of the count's has added the following note : — This request to monseigneur the Count was granted to the suppliant, who thereupon left Siegen on the 2<sup>nd</sup> April, 1577, and returned about twelve days later. — Bakhuizen van den Brink points out that the 2 in the date is so placed as to imply that it ought to be followed by a unit, and that the 2 stands for the tens. The supposition is justified by the fact that the powers given to Jan Rubens by the magistrate of Cologne are dated the 26<sup>th</sup> April, 1577. In his petition Jan Rubens states

(1) B. C. DU MORTIER : *Recherches sur le lieu de naissance de Pierre-Paul Rubens*. Brussels, Arnold, 1861.

(2) BAKHUIZEN VAN DEN BRINK : *Les Rubens à Siegen*. La Haye, Martinus Nijhoff, 1861.

(3) B. C. DU MORTIER : *Nouvelles Recherches sur le lieu de naissance de Pierre-Paul Rubens*. Brussels, Arnold, 1862. —

P. GÉNARD : *P. P. Rubens*. — F. JOS. VAN DEN BRANDEN : *Geschiedenis der Antwerpsche Schilderschool*.

that his wife, his children and his bail will remain as guarantees for his return. He could not return to Siegen before the end of April, and consequently Maria Pypelinckx remained in that town during his absence (1).

Bakhuizen van den Brink gives two other documents. The first is a letter from Maria Pypelinckx, dated from Siegen, the 14<sup>th</sup> June, 1577, to John of Nassau, in which she asks for power to settle with her husband in some small town in the Low Countries or in a German town nearer the frontier. The second is a letter from her mother dated the same day supporting



A FARM — Drawing (British Museum, London).

this request. Maria Pypelinckx, then, was at Siegen on the 14<sup>th</sup> of June, 1577, six weeks after the date of the authority granted to Jan Rubens, and fourteen days before the birth of her son (2).

If Rubens was born on the 28<sup>th</sup> June, 1577, his mother was at Siegen on the 14<sup>th</sup> of the same month in which he saw the light. But to render their thesis plausible, those who maintain that Rubens was born at Antwerp put the date of his birth at an earlier period, between the signature of the authority granted to Jan Rubens to go to Cologne and the dispatch of the letters from Maria and Clara Pypelinckx mentioned above. It must be admitted that they upheld their opinion with a conviction and an ability that command our admiration ; they produced such a number of little details, which gave so specious a character to their reasoning that the writer, with many others, allowed himself to be convinced of its solidity. But after mature examination and careful weighing of the whole, we are forced to agree that the whole edifice lacks foundation and that instead of a solid building we see before us nothing but a piece of scene-painting.

(1) *Les Rubens à Siegen*, p. 39.

(2) *Les Rubens à Siegen*, p. 40.



What proofs did the advocates of Antwerp advance? The earliest biographical information we have of Rubens, they say, is what we read under the portrait published by Jan Meyssens, and this affirms that he was born at Antwerp; the patent of nobility granted by Charles I says so too; in his life of Philip Rubens, Jan Brant states that his brothers, sisters and parents were born at Antwerp; Rubens held several high political offices for which the right of citizenship was necessary; when, on the 28<sup>th</sup> August, 1618, he appeared before the notary



LANDSCAPE STUDY — Drawing (Duke of Devonshire)

Jan Nicolaï with Jan Breughel and Hendrik van Balen, all three are mentioned in the deed as painters, citizens and inhabitants of Antwerp; Rubens's right to this title of citizen was recognised without having been granted him by any legal act; he had it therefore by right of birth; finally it is evident, they declare, from several documents printed by Bakhuizen van den Brink, that Maria Pypelinckx came to Antwerp in May, 1577, and that it was in May, and not on the 28<sup>th</sup> June, 1577, that Rubens was born.

We will consider first the documents which are to prove the presence of Maria Pypelinckx in Antwerp in May, 1577. The first is the power of attorney drawn up by the magistrate of the town of Cologne, on the 26<sup>th</sup> April, 1577, on the demand of Jan Rubens. the text of which is as follows :

« We the burgomaster and concillors of the imperial city of Cologne, to each and all  
 » health and prosperity. We bring to the knowledge of all men and confirm that the  
 » honourable and learned man, master Jan Rubens, son of Bartholomeus, doctor in civil and  
 » canon law and citizen of the city of Antwerp, has appeared before us, who in good and due  
 » form of law and in the clearest and most peremptory form that was in his power, has

ordained, created, established and solemnly deputed as his true and incontestable attorneys, proxies, executors and agents for the matters hereinafter mentioned, and as his deputies by universal and special title, but so as the speciality shall not invalidate the universality nor vice-versa, that is to say the honourable men and worthy ladies, Maria Pipelingk, Hendrik Pipelinck d'Othovien, his parents-in-law ; Dionysius Pypelinck, his uncle, and Philip Landmeter, his brother, citizens of Antwerp whether absent or present and each of them in particular, in such manner that the condition of the first beginner shall not be better nor that of the continuator worse, but that whatever any shall have begun may be continued and completed by another, etc. (1).

Dumortier submits that the power of attorney should have read : Maria Pypelinckx, wife of Rubens, Hendrik Pypelinckx and Clara de Thonion (or Thovion) his parents-in-law, etc. His whole argument rests on this hypothesis ; arbitrary though it is, we need not reject it to demonstrate how untenable the system is. Thus, Dumortier continues, Maria Pypelinckx was sent on the 26<sup>th</sup> April into the Low Countries to take possession of the goods of her husband. This could not have occurred earlier, for the restitution to the Netherlands of their confiscated property had only been determined upon in the preceding month, and the financial condition of the household was so precarious that they could no longer defer the recovery of what was owed them.

In the letter addressed by Maria Pypelinckx to Count John of Nassau on the 14<sup>th</sup> June, 1577, we read : Having now for more than six years continually wept for this our disaster, » calamity and affliction one upon the other, it has pleased the good God, the source of all » pity, to console me a little, in giving me the means, which I never hoped for, of being » able to beseech M. le Prince d'Orange your brother, that he may permit us also, with our fellow-men, to rejoice a little through his grace in that peace which by his holy and wise » leadership our country has recovered.

On the 26<sup>th</sup> April the prince of Orange was at Dordrecht, on the 7<sup>th</sup> May at Haarlem, on the 17<sup>th</sup> at Geertruidenberg, on the 18<sup>th</sup> June at Delft, and during all that time he did not cross the Rhine : consequently, say the defenders of the claims of Antwerp, to have been able to beseech the prince, Maria Pypelinckx must have gone to seek him at Geertruidenberg, and travelled by the Meuse and the Rhine into Brabant.

It is evident that the whole of this scheme makes it impossible for the birth of Rubens to have occurred on the 28<sup>th</sup> June. And therefore Monsieur Dumortier claims that that was not the day on which Rubens came into the world.

Rubens he says, was not, in fact, born on the 28<sup>th</sup> June, 1577, for in that case he would not have been 64 years old, as the inscription on his tomb declares, but 63. He could not have been born on the 28<sup>th</sup> June, 1576, for then he would have been eleven at the date of his leaving Cologne in June, 1587, whereas he declares himself that he was only ten. He was born before the 30<sup>th</sup> May, 1577, since on the day of his death, the 30<sup>th</sup> May, 1640, he was in his 64<sup>th</sup> year.

(1) P. GÉNARD : Op. cit. p. 178. The deed is very carelessly copied ; we find words misspelt, and it is to be noted that the deed should have mentioned as proxies : Maria Pypelinckx *his wife*, Hendrik Pypelinckx and Clara de Thovion *his parents-in-law*, etc., or else Clara de Thovion and Hendrik Pypelinckx *his parents-in-law*.

We will observe that the epitaph says that Rubens was 64 when he died, whereas he was only 63, and that he would equally have been 63 if he had been born in mid-May, 1577. Since it appears certain that he left Cologne after 1587, it is proved that his memory played him false when he declared that he was ten years old at his return to Antwerp. In these vague and inexact indications we find no reason for disturbing the date given by Meyssens.

Let us turn now to the power of attorney given by Jan Rubens, the proceedings with the prince of Orange and the journey to Antwerp. Besides Maria Pypelinckx, three or four other members of the family are appointed to go and take livery of the goods of Jan Rubens. There is nothing to prove that any one of them had performed the commission in May, 1577, and still less that it was Maria Pypelinckx who undertook the journey. When she says that she has found a means of asking pardon for her husband from the prince of Orange, she need not necessarily have meant that she went in search of him to throw herself at his feet; she might have written, or sent someone. M. Génard has printed a letter, dated from Geertruidenberg, on the 18<sup>th</sup> May, 1577, addressed by Philip Marnix de Sainte Aldegonde to Jan Rubens. The latter had asked the faithful adviser of William the Silent to lay before the prince a petition to the same effect as that sent on the 14<sup>th</sup> June to John of Nassau. Marnix replied that the time was not propitious, that he had not yet presented the petition, that William was going to leave the matter in the hands of his brother, that Rubens must wait, and that Marnix could do nothing for him, were he his own brother. It is clear that if Maria Pypelinckx had been to Geertruidenberg before the 18<sup>th</sup> May, Marnix could not have written thus. It is clear also that if she had formed the intention of going to see William of Orange, her husband would not have asked Marnix to present a petition.

But there is another proof, stronger than all the rest and as simple as it is irrefutable. Maria Pypelinckx was at Siegen in the middle of May and at the beginning of June; if her son was born in either of those months, it can only have been at Siegen. It is out of the question that the mother of five children should have abandoned her family without any absolute necessity, and that in the ninth month of her pregnancy, to undertake a journey of eighty leagues at a time when journeys were so difficult, and when war with all its horrors might break out from one moment to another. It is out of the question that she should have accomplished the journey in forty days at the outside, and found time to settle the numerous and complicated affairs of her husband, which would have taken not days but months, visit the prince of Orange, undergo her confinement, recover her health and return to Siegen.

We need not delay further to sift the texts, we need not examine minutely whether the circumstances of Maria Pypelinckx's journey fit closely one into another, we need not ask whether there was really any necessity for her to go to Antwerp, whether she had anything to do there, and whether she did whatever it was; we can affirm that the whole hypothesis is extremely hazardous, and that it rests not only on improbabilities but on impossibilities, and consequently cannot stand upright.

As to the other reasons alleged in favour of Antwerp, none of them is sufficiently convincing to secure the acceptance of an impossible scheme. That in Rubens's time he was generally considered a native of Antwerp, and that Charles I of England and Jan Meyssens shared that opinion, does not prove that it was well founded. It is very possible that he never



needed to claim the right of citizenship, since, as painter to the sovereign of the country, he enjoyed so many other more considerable rights and privileges. Finally, the fact of his having been styled painter, citizen and inhabitant of Antwerp by an Antwerp notary as by his brothers in art does not prove that he was so by right of birth or otherwise. All these arguments rest on terms of elastic signification, which were employed without any care on the part of those who pronounced or wrote them about the scrupulous weighing of their meaning or effect, and without any suspicion that they would one day be taken as evidence for or against Rubens's right to the title of a citizen of Antwerp. Thence comes their inability to invalidate in our eyes the clear and obvious claims that can be advanced by Siegen.

We conclude, therefore, without hesitation that Peter Paul Rubens was born at Siegen on the 28<sup>th</sup> June, 1577.

## B. THE CHILDHOOD OF RUBENS

THE BIOGRAPHY OF RUBENS BY HIS NEPHEW PHILIP RUBENS. — EARLIEST YEARS. —  
RUBENS'S SCHOOL-DAYS. — HIS STAY IN THE HOUSE OF MARGUERITE DE LIGNE. —  
HIS GENERAL ATTAINMENTS.



HEAD OF MADONNA — Drawing.  
Study for *The Miracle of St. Ildefonso*  
(Albertina, Vienna).

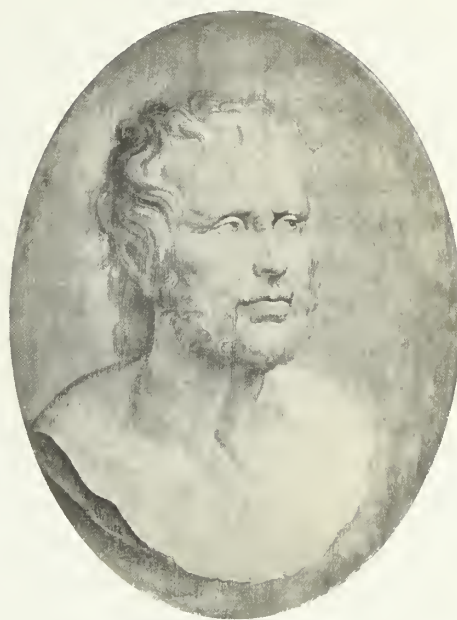
THE BIOGRAPHY OF RUBENS BY HIS NEPHEW PHILIP RUBENS. — Rubens was born at Cologne in the year of our Lord 1577; there he received his earliest lessons, and showed such talents that he had no trouble in excelling his companions of the same age. In 1587, after the death of his father he accompanied his mother with great pleasure in her return to Antwerp, whose gates were open to all good citizens. There he continued his studies.

Thus we read in the Latin biography which we owe to Rubens's nephew Philip, son of the painter's brother Philip. This being the most trustworthy if not the oldest of the lives of our artist, it will not be inappropriate to state how it was written, and to examine how far it deserves our confidence.

A French painter who wrote much on art and artists but produced nothing of importance with the brush, Roger de Piles, was at work in 1676 on a treatise on the theory of painting and the works of Rubens. He wished to include a life of the artist whom he esteemed above all others. Through the medium of the duc de Richelieu, who owned no less than 23 works by Rubens, he applied to Philip Rubens for an account of the life of his uncle. On the 11<sup>th</sup> February, 1676, Philip Rubens sent the work asked for to Sieur Picard, the duke's man of

business, who sent it on to de Piles. At the request of the French writer, he also furnished him in the course of the same year with certain more precise pieces of information, and in the first few days of 1577 the treatise which contained his biography was published under the title : *Conversations sur la connaissance de la peinture et sur le jugement qu'on doit faire des Tableaux. Où par occasion il est parlé de la vie de RUBENS et de quelques uns de ses plus beaux ouvrages.* (Conversations on the knowledge of painting and on the judgment that should be formed on Pictures. Wherein, incidentally, is told of the life of Rubens and of some of his most beautiful works). Paris, Nicholas Langlois, rue St Jacques, at the Sign of the Victory, M.DC.LXXVII.

In the letters he wrote on this occasion to Philip Rubens, Roger de Piles says that he would publish, together with the account of the pictures by Rubens in the collection of the duc de Richelieu, the succinct biography which had been forwarded to him by the duke, if he were in possession of fuller particulars. (1) « It has already been written by Baglione and by Bellori, he says, but it is not clear enough nor circumstantial enough, principally on his works, his domestic life and his relations with his equals. » He applied to Philip Rubens again, therefore, for some details on these points. Rubens supplied them in a letter which has been preserved. (2) De Piles made use of most these statements, reinforced them by what he thought most interesting in Baglione and Bellori and what he had been told by others, added several ornaments of his own invention and published the book. On the 26<sup>th</sup> February, 1677, in



BUST OF SENECA  
Grisaille (Plantin-Moretus Museum).

sending a copy to Philip Rubens, he wrote : « It is only right to make you acquainted with a work of which the most agreeable, if not the largest, part is yours, for it is owing to the trouble you have been kind enough to take on my account that I have brought out the life of the late M. Rubens ; I have availed myself of it, as you will see, with certain other information I was able to obtain elsewhere, and what I have been told by several people who knew him and were witnesses of the things they related to me, and I have not hesitated to use them because I found them confirmed by the testimony of many and even of those who have written this same life. »

We know from this who furnished Roger de Piles with the Latin text of the life of Rubens, who gave him further details, and where he found the particulars be added. We learn also from the letters written by Philip Rubens on this occasion who it was that had supplied Rubens himself with the matter for his biography. On the 11<sup>th</sup> February, 1676, he wrote to sieur Picard, through whom the duc de Richelieu had asked for his biography : « Having been informed

(1) Letter of the 5th March 1675. RUELENS : *La Vie de Rubens par Roger de Piles. Bulletin-Rubens*, II, p. 164.

(2) *Ibid.* pp. 164-167.

that a seigneur of France of the highest rank and merit desires to have knowledge of the life and fortune of Rubens, I have considered it my duty to satisfy his desire, since it can only add to the lustre and honour of the family of which I am the nephew, I send him therefore this abridgment which I have drawn and arranged from the memoirs of him left by his eldest son. (1) It is the recollections of Albert Rubens, therefore, which we find summarized in the pages written by his cousin. Unhappily the account is, indeed, very succinct; but even so it is of the greatest value; it relates broadly the principal events in the painter's life.

We are indebted to another fervent admirer of Rubens for the preservation of the letters that passed between de Piles and Philip Rubens, and of other precious documents. Francis Mols, whose labours date from the middle of the second half of the eighteenth century, devoted many years to researches into the life and works of Rubens. At his death he left fourteen large volumes full of copies of letters, documents, catalogues, printed pieces and notes due to his personal observations. He did not use these materials himself to write a life of his favourite painter; but he preserved many an important document for our benefit. Thus we find in his scrap-books three different copies of the Latin biography entitled *Vita Petri Pauli Rubenii*. He states that he found the text of it in a copy by Gaspard Gevartius, one of Rubens's friends. The work was printed for the first time on behalf of the baron de Reiffenberg in 1837.

Roger de Piles states, as we have seen, in a letter to Philip Rubens, that Baglione and Bellori had written the life of Rubens before him, and he borrows several particulars from their writings. These two Italian authors were contemporaries of Rubens and each issued a collection of lives of artists, which included one of Rubens. Baglione, who was born at Rome in 1571 and died in 1644, published his book two years before his death under the title of : *Le Vite de' Pittori, Scultori, Architetti ed Intagliatori, dal Pontificato di Gregorio XIII del 1572. fino a' tempi di Papa Urbano VIII. nel 1642* (The Lives of the Painters, Sculptors, Architects and Engravers, from the Pontificate of Gregory XIII, 1572, to the time of Pope Urban VIII in 1642). His, therefore, is the earliest biography of Rubens. In his short sketch he deals mainly with the painter's sojourn in Italy, but is equally well informed on the rest of his career. Bellori was born in 1615 and died in 1696 at Rome, his native town. He published his well-known book : *Vite dei Pittori, Scultori ed Architetti moderni* in 1672, four years, that is, before the appearance of the work of Roger de Piles. Besides the details he found in Baglione's book, he gives a quantity of information on the works which Rubens painted for France and Spain, as well as for the churches of Belgium. He gives a full description of the gallery of Marie de Medici, which has been reproduced by all subsequent biographers of Rubens, of the Triumphs of the Sacrament, and the Entry of the Cardinal-Infant into Antwerp, and calls attention to many others of the master's works.

We must add that the researches carried on during the last century in public and private archives have brought to light a large number of new facts concerning the life and works of Rubens, so that to-day we know the history of the painter far better than his contemporaries and even than his nearest relatives.

(1) *Bulletin-Rubens*, II, pp. 162-3.



THE CHILDHOOD OF RUBENS. — We must see now whether the information Philip Rubens gave de Piles was accurate, and note in passing the information we have drawn from other sources.

Without returning to Philip Rubens's statement concerning the birth of his uncle at Cologne, we must examine more closely the rest of the passage quoted above. According to the author of the *Vita*, Rubens's mother returned to Antwerp with her children in 1587, after the death of her husband. That statement is confirmed by Jan Brant in his life of Philip Rubens, Peter Paul's brother; but other documents point to the belief that it is erroneous. It is true that on the 27<sup>th</sup> June, 1587, the magistrate of Cologne granted Maria Pypelinckx a certificate declaring that she had lived in that town since the year 1569, and had conducted herself in every way as an honest citizeness should (1), whence we may conclude that the widow was then intending to leave the land of exile as soon as possible for her native country; but from what motives we know not, she deferred the execution of her project. In fact, on the 25<sup>th</sup> April, 1588, on her demand, Peter Ximenius appeared before the burgomasters and council of Cologne and affirmed that the signature of Jan Rubens to a deed drawn up at Siegen on the 31<sup>st</sup> May, 1576, in the presence of the said Ximenius was genuine. In this deed the deceased acknowledged that he owed his wife a sum of 8000 thalers, which she had paid to release him from prison (2). If it is not certain, it is at least probable that Maria Pypelinckx was still at Cologne at that date and that she herself laid before Ximenius the document which he certified to be genuine.

A more decisive proof that Jan Rubens's widow prolonged her stay in Cologne for a still further period is the declaration made on the 24<sup>th</sup> November, 1589, before the aldermen of the town of Antwerp, by Master Andreas van Breuseghem, alderman of Antwerp, Jonker Lazarus Haller and Jonker Gilles de Meere. The first declares upon oath that to his certain knowledge Maria Pypelinckx lived in Cologne with her four children Jan-Baptist, Philip, Peter Paul and Blandina, during the years 1583, 1584 and 1585; the second, that she lived there from 1579 to 1585; the third, that he knew her to be there from 1577 to 1580. All three affirm further that » about nine months since she came from Cologne to dwell in this town with three of her » children, and that at that moment her eldest son Jan-Baptist had left Cologne three years and » a half ago to go to Italy ». To prove that they were in a position to give this evidence from perfect knowledge, they all three affirm that they had always maintained friendly and intimate relations with Maria Pypelinckx and her children (3).

If, towards the end of November, 1589, Maria Pypelinckx had already arrived in Antwerp nine months before, with the three children who still lived with her, she must have left Cologne at the end of February of the same year. However affirmative may be this declaration by Maria Pypelinckx's three friends concerning the date of her arrival at Antwerp, it does not entirely convince me; dates fixed by memory and approximately do not merit absolute confidence, and the fact that Maria Pypelinckx applied for her certificate in 1587, and that Peter-Paul and his nephew both declare that the departure for Antwerp took place in that year inclines me to doubt

(1) P. GÉNARD : *Rubens*. P. 266.

(2) Ibid. P. 143.

(3) F. JOS. VAN DEN BRANDEN : *Op. cit.*, p. 380.

whether Jan Rubens's widow stayed a year and a half longer at Cologne, and to suspect that she may have reached Antwerp in 1588.

On her arrival Maria Pypelinckx and her three children went to live in the Meir, the largest square in Antwerp, in the house called St Arnold's, which to-day is numbered 54. Her pecuniary circumstances must have been flourishing to permit the occupation of an estate of such importance. And, indeed, we find that when, on the 25<sup>th</sup> August, 1590, her daughter Blandina married Simeon du Parcq, she gave her, besides her trousseau, an annual income of two hundred florins. On the 31<sup>st</sup> October, 1601, the house in the Meir was sold by Maria Pypelinckx and her sister Susanna to Hendrik Hoens. From that date Jan Rubens's widow went to live in the Kloosterstraat, in the house which she occupied till her death (1).



BALTHASAR MORETUS — Engraved by Corn. Galle after Erasmus Quellin (Plantin-Moretus Museum).

THE SCHOOL-DAYS OF RUBENS. — Rubens was then ten years old according to his own account, or rather, as we saw above, eleven, or even eleven and a half. At Cologne, according to his nephew, he had excelled his school-fellows thanks to his abilities. He continued his studies at Antwerp. One of his school-fellows was the friend who remained faithful to him during the greater part of his life and was to become the head of the famous Plantinian printing-house, Balthasar Moretus, son of Jan, grandson of the celebrated Christophe Plantin, and himself a distinguished man. In a letter he wrote on the 3<sup>rd</sup> November, 1600, to Philip Rubens, then at

Rome, he tells him that he had known his brother Peter Paul at school, where he had learned to love him for his superior intellect and his amiable character (2).

Balthasar Moretus was born on the 23<sup>th</sup> July, 1574, and was consequently three years older than his friend Rubens. From the accounts of the Plantin press we learn that from the 29<sup>th</sup> April 1586 till the 22<sup>nd</sup> October 1590, he and his brother Jan went to school at Master Rumoldus Verdonck's, in the cemetery of Notre-Dame; it stood behind the choir of Notre-Dame on the present Milk-market. The master, Rumoldus Verdonck, was born at Eerselen in 1541. He was formerly schoolmaster at Lier, and was admitted to teach Latin and Greek in 1579. In 1580 he was received into the Schoolmasters' Guild, and obtained the rights of citizenship on the 7<sup>th</sup> July, 1581. He died on the 12<sup>th</sup> June, 1620, and was buried in the church of St James, where his tomb may still be seen.

(1) AUG. THÛYS: *Historiek der straten van Antwerpen*, p.p. 404, 585.

(2) *Fratre tuum jam a puero cognovi in scholis, et amavi lectissimi ac suavissimi ingenii juvenem.* (Archives of the Museum Plantin-Moretus, Register XII, p. 126. — *Correspondance de Rubens*, I, p. 1.)



In the school he was master of, Latin and a little Greek were taught, and probably also Flemish. According to the Registers of the Plantin press the classical works in use there from 1586 to 1590 were as follows : In Latin, *Epistolæ familiares*, Cicero's *Oratio pro Archia poeta* and *de Amicitia*, the four first books of the *Aeneïd* and the *Bucolics* of Vergil, the *Adelphi* and selected passages from Terence, and two works of Schonaeus, *Tobaeus* and *Saulus* : in Greek, Plutarch's *Education of children* ; the grammars and theoretical manuals they used were, for Latin, Despauterius's *Rudimenta* and *Syntaxis*, Harlemannus's *Etymologia*, Valerius's *Rhetorica* and Hunnæus's *Dialectica* ; for Greek, Clenardus's *Grammatica Graeca* (1).

While Rubens was in Rome in 1606 with his brother, who had studied under Justus Lipsius at Louvain at the same time as Balthasar Moretus and had kept up relations with his fellow-student, he bade him send his greetings to his old comrade at Rumoldus Verdonck's school. When Peter Paul married in 1609, Balthasar Moretus sent the news to his brother Jan as an event in the life of their common friend. But it is impossible that they can have been at school together for long, for Rubens left the paternal roof soon after the marriage of his sister Blandina as his mother declares in her will. That marriage took place on the 25<sup>th</sup> August 1590, and Peter Paul must have ceased to have lessons from Verdonck in the last quarter of that year.

Philip Rubens says that his uncle was fifteen when he left school (1). According to every calculation, Peter Paul was only thirteen and a half at that period, and if it is true that he had returned to Antwerp after the beginning of 1589, he could not have attended school for two full years. When we reflect that, without being a man of letters, he was possessed of wide and various knowledge we can easily understand why Roger de Piles remarks in one of his letters to Philip Rubens that he thinks it hardly probable that Rubens can have acquired his instruction at such a tender age. To that the great artist's nephew replies that after leaving school and in spite of his artistic labours, he did not cease to apply himself to Latin, so that his life was one long course of study. And, he adds, « his father being extremely versed in » letters, he received of him sound principles and instructions, in addition to the quick and lively » wits with which nature had endowed him ».



PHILIP RUBENS  
After an engraving by Corn. Galle.

(1) MAX ROOSES : *Petrus-Paulus Rubens en Balthasar Moretus*. Antwerp, 1884, p. 10. Partly taken from the *Bulletin-Rubens*, I and II.

(2) *Bulletin-Rubens*, II. p. 164.



This must have been the case. Rubens received his first lessons at Cologne, at school and from his father, a highly educated man. At Antwerp, under his master Rumoldus Verdonek, he continued the study of the classics thus begun. After leaving his mother's house, during his residence with the countess de Lalaing and the years of his apprenticeship to his masters in painting, he continued to increase his general information.

RUBENS AT MARGUERITE DE LIGNE'S. Rubens, then, left his mother's house towards the end of the year 1590 to use his own wings and earn his own living, as Maria Pypelinckx herself attests. The fact is confirmed by Philip Rubens who informs us where his uncle went after leaving school. Soon, he says, he was placed by his mother in the service of the noble lady Marguerite de Ligne, widow of Philippe, count de Lalaing, where he remained for some time as her page. He returns to this point in one of his letters to de Piles and adds : « The widow of Count Philippe de Lalaing, whose page he had been, was called Marguerite » de Ligne, mother of the Countess de Berlaymont (1). We know nothing more for certain about this singular departure of Rubens into the world.

The noble lady who had taken him into her service was Marguerite de Ligne-Arenberg, who had married in 1569 Philippe de Lalaing, lord of the county of Escornaix, baron de Wavre, captain-general and grand-bailiff of Hainault. In 1583 she was left a widow with two daughters, Catherine or Christine, who married Maximilian, Count de Belle, and Marguerite, who became the wife of Florent de Berlaymont and founded the Berlaymont convent at Brussels. Marguerite de Lalaing died in 1598 and was buried at Belœil. In her husband's life-time, the family lived in the capital of Hainault, where it sometimes occupied the castle of Mons, sometimes that of Naast, or else at Audenarde, where the castle of Escornaix may still be seen. After the bailiff's death, his widow, being no longer obliged to live at Mons, probably went to settle at Audenarde, where Rubens spent some time with her (2). We say some time ; for the author of the *Vita* assures us that he soon became disgusted with court life and that, his tastes drawing him towards the study of painting, he asked his mother's leave to be apprenticed to the Antwerp painter, Adam van Noort. The family fortune being considerably diminished through the war, she gave him permission. The household of the countess de Lalaing must have been conducted on lofty principles, for Philip Rubens speaks of it as a court. No doubt it proved a school of life and manners for the future artist ; but we can well understand that this domesticity, however brilliant, must have soon become repugnant to his active and vigorous temper. It is probable that he returned to his mother's house in the course of the year 1591.

He was not there for long. The will of Maria Pypelinckx, made on the 18<sup>th</sup> December, 1606, shows that, after the marriage of her daughter Blandina, which took place on the 25<sup>th</sup> August 1590, her two sons Philip and Peter Paul – paid something towards their board and lodging, – and same document repeats that – from this time or shortly after both ceased to be at her

(1) *Bulletin-Rubens*, II, p. 167.

(2) *Correspondance de Rubens*. I, p. XIII.

charges. (1) Soon after his return, therefore, from the countess de Lalaing's, Rubens went to live with his first master in painting, who was not Adam van Noort, as Philip Rubens states, but Tobias Verhaecht. There is nothing surprising in his having gone to live in the house with him, for Verhaecht was connected with the Rubens family by his marriage with Susannah van Mockenborch, grand-daughter of Jan de Lantmeter, Jan Rubens's step-father. We may conclude from Maria Pypelinckx's statement that in the same way he lived with the two other masters he had afterwards. We know, however, that before his departure for Italy he had set up house for himself or returned to his mother's. In fact, on the 6<sup>th</sup> August, 1628, he declares before the notary van Breuseghem that Deodato del Monte had boarded and lodged with him, while serving his apprenticeship, before Rubens's departure for Italy. (2).

To sum up our knowledge of Rubens's childhood, we may say that he left school before the completion of his fourteenth year, and had made astonishing progress in a short time.

THE GENERAL ATTAINMENTS OF RUBENS. — The chief study of those days was Latin. Rubens had a sound knowledge of the language. We know from his letters that he understood it without difficulty; he often speaks in them of Latin books he has read. To give only one example, we will quote the beginning of his letter of the 1<sup>st</sup> August, 1637 to Franciscus Junius, whose Latin treatise *De Pictura Veterum* he had just read. I wished first of all to see and read the book, and this I have now done with close attention, and further on he gives his opinion on the work in a passage of elegant Latin which occupies the greater part of the letter. We find another proof of the ease with which he handled the language in his letter of the 29<sup>th</sup> December, 1628, to Gaspard Gevaerts. He begins thus: My reply in the Dutch tongue will clearly show that I am unworthy of the honour of receiving your letters in Latin. My exercises and the *studia bonarum Artium* (the study of letters) are left so far behind, that I ought *veniam præfari solacisimum liceat fecisse* (to begin by apologizing for committing solecisms.) — In spite of this apology he writes half his long letter in Latin, proving that whatever he had forgotten of the attainments gained at school, he still knew enough to be able to express himself easily in the learned language.

We find a striking proof of a more than ordinary knowledge of Latin in his letter of February, 1618, to Franciscus Sweerts, in which he gives his opinion on some objects of ancient art, and among them a cup, of which he speaks as follows: bibebant autem in sacris ut Saufeia (they drank like Saufeia during the sacrifices in the temple). Sweerts sent the letter to Camden, the English antiquary, who had asked his opinion. Neither the editors of Camden's Latin correspondence nor those of Rubens's letters could explain this passage; for *Saufeia* they read *Lauseia* or *Lanfera*, and failed to make anything of the word, which is nothing but the name of a Roman priestess, whom Juvenal describes in his Satire ix as given to drinking. The various manuscripts of the Latin satirist give the name as *Saufeia*, *Laufeia*, or *Laufella*. (3)

(1) P. GÉNARD : Op. cit. pp. 374, 376.

(2) CORN. DE BIE : *Het gulden Cabinet*, p. 135.

(3) The complete passage in Rubens's letter is as follows : Sed ne nihil dicam, cum nihil tamen certi in re tam obscura  
\* affirmare ausim, si vitula istud animal est ego suspicarer de quodam voto pro frugibus juxta illud vulgi : cum vitula

A man must indeed be very familiar with the Latin authors to mention thus in passing a name which only appears once in the classics. That Rubens was certainly alluding to this line of Juvenal, his favourite author, is proved by his quoting immediately afterwards a line of Vergil : *Cum faciam vitula pro frugibus, ipse venito*, which the oldest commentators on Juvenal refer to in connection with the name of Saufeia. (1)



THE TRIUMPH OF SCIPIO  
Drawing after Giulio Romano (Louvre, Paris).

Besides Latin, Rubens knew French. From 1621 onwards, we have letters of his written in that language, which no doubt he used at the Court of the Archdukes at Brussels, and in

*facies pro frugibus suscepto ; hoc suadet patera frugifera et vas pitorium in altera manu ab urnis fluviorum quantitate et forma omnino dispar [urnæ siquidem grandes et depressiore alveo] : bibebant autem in sacris ut Saufeia ; corona etiam sacrificiis propria sive florida, sive herbacea vel aurea vel alius materiæ ut multis exemplis doceri potest. (Correspondance de Rubens, II, p. 124).*

(1) The form in which the xvi and xvii century editions give this passage of Juvenal is as follows :

Sed prodere malunt  
Arcanum, quam subrepti potare Falerni  
Pro populo faciens quantum Saufeia (or Laufella) bibebat.  
(Juvenal, Sat. ix, vv. 115-117).

(For they would rather divulge the secret mysteries than drink in secret as much Falernian as Saufeia used to drink while sacrificing before the people).

Then follow the comments :

VETUS SCHOL : *Pro populo faciens quantum Saufeia bibebat.* Sacrificans virgo Vestæ.

Virgilius : *Cum faciam vitulum pro frugibus, ipse venito.*

JOANNES BRITANNICUS : *Laufella* (another reading for *Saufeia*) *bibebat.* Laufellam sui temporis mulierem vinolentam uocat.





Jan Brant  
(Pinakothek, Munich)









several of his diplomatic negotiations. He had probably learnt it in early youth at home, and perfected himself in it at the Countess de Lalaing's. He says somewhere, indeed, that he does not know French and is only employing the language on that single occasion in order that his letter may be read to someone who knew no other tongue; but he makes this declaration at the end of a long letter in irreproachable French. (1)

The language he ordinarily wrote was Italian, the first principles of which he may have learnt from Otho Vænius, and in which he rapidly perfected himself in Italy. Italian was then,



BLIND ELYMAS  
Drawing after Raphael (Albertina).

all over Europe, the language of the aristocracy and of diplomacy, and we find Rubens using it alike with Spaniards and Frenchmen, with Germans and English.

Flemish or Dutch was his mother tongue, the language of the domestic hearth, of his familiar intercourse, and his correspondence with his friends and pupils. In those days little trouble was taken by people of distinction to teach their children their native language. It was considered that there was no need of books or lessons to learn it, an opinion which unfortunately prevailed amongst us for two centuries more. The result was that everyone wrote pretty well as he pleased, and that in this domain there reigned complete liberty born of complete ignorance. Rubens, therefore, wrote his own language very ill, but no worse than others; there might almost have been a bet about who should distort his language the most; and

(1) Letter to Pierre Dupuy. Antwerp, 1630. — GACHET : *Lettres inédites de Pierre-Paul Rubens*, p. 255.

whoever slipped the most French words into his Flemish was considered the most fashionable, learned and cultivated. Here and there you might meet with a few more sensible minds, who held it right to learn their mother-tongue and write it according to the rules, just like foreign idioms, but these new ideas were only to gain ground later, and that in the Northern parts of the Low Countries.

It was a matter of course that Rubens should be no stranger to Spanish, for our provinces lay under the dominion of Spain, and he was constantly in relations with people born in that country. If any proof that he knew the language were needed, it might be found in a letter he wrote to Valavez on the 2<sup>nd</sup> April, 1626, in which he asks his correspondent to send him the Spanish rather than the French edition of a book recently published.

Rubens's childhood was a very chequered one. The remembrance of past sufferings and keen anxiety about the future which hung like a dark cloud over his home, the moves from Siegen to Cologne, from Cologne to Antwerp, and thence to the countess de Lalaing's, his father's death, and his mother's unceasing anguish early matured his lively wits at the expense of the careless happiness of childish years. In the latter portion of them, his parents had lost a great part of their fortune. During the interval that elapsed between the return of Peter Paul Rubens to Antwerp and his departure for Italy, Maria Pypelinckx found herself compelled to sell several of her landed estates in order to pay everyone what was due to them; but she was not destitute of resources, as her will, among other things, proves. The family lived the life of people in easy circumstances; and in spite of the trials and misfortunes of his parents, Peter Paul received the education of a youth of the higher middle class.

### C. THE APPRENTICESHIP OF RUBENS

RUBENS'S MASTERS — THE SCHOOL OF ANTWERP IN 1590 — TOBIAS VERHAECHT —  
ADAM VAN NOORT — OTHO VÆNIUS — THE WORKS OF RUBENS DURING HIS APPRENTICESHIP

RUBENS'S MASTERS. -- We have seen already that the author of the *Vita* relates how Rubens, quickly disgusted with court-life and impelled by instinct towards painting, obtained permission from his mother, whose fortune was considerably diminished owing to the war, to be apprenticed to the Antwerp painter, Adam van Noort. The author adds: "For four years he learnt under this master the principles of his art, in a manner which clearly showed that nature had made him a painter. After that he remained for four years apprentice to Otho Vænius, who at that time was the first of the painters of the Netherlands."

We find complementary information in the inscription on the portrait of Tobias Verhaecht, published by Meyssens in 1649. There we read: "Tobias Verhaecht, landscape-painter, very celebrated for his choice pictures, was the first master of the famous P. Paul Rubbens, born at Antwerp in the year 1566 and died in 1631". In the article on Rubens by Sandrart



in his *Teutsche Academie* we find this fact confirmed, the German author having either, as is most probable, taken it from Meyssens, or heard it from Rubens himself, with whom he had travelled in Holland.

Rubens set out for Italy on the 9<sup>th</sup> May, 1600. If he spent eight years in the studios of Otho Vaenius and Adam van Noort he must have become apprenticed to the latter in 1592. Only a very short time, therefore, can have elapsed between his leaving the countess de Lalaing's and his entering the studio of Tobias Verhaecht. Supposing that he had spent six months, from the end of the year 1590 to the middle of 1591, at the court of the noble lady, he may have worked for a year, from the middle of 1591 to the middle of 1592, under the direction of his first master.

Before entering on a few details about Rubens's masters, it will be necessary to explain the condition of our school of painting at the moment when the man who was to restore and command it, presented himself for admission.

THE SCHOOL OF ANTWERP IN 1590. — Since the first quarter of the sixteenth century, Antwerp had become the wealthiest and most populous city of the Low Countries. Her harbour was the most important of western Europe, merchants and scholars from all countries in the world flocked within her walls. She was not only raised above the level of the other towns by her material wealth, but she was also the metropolis of the arts, at that epoch of incomparable prosperity.

Quentin Matsys, the most renowned representative of the old school in its closing period, had passed his active and brilliant career in Antwerp and had died there in 1530, after creating master-pieces hallowed by universal admiration. Joachim De Patinir had died there six years before, after he and his contemporary Henri De Bles, had together rejuvenated the earlier art by giving landscape a large place in their pictures. With them the first period of Flemish painting finally closed. The new generation had already broken with the traditions of its predecessors; it was in pursuit of another ideal, and had founded a new school of which Antwerp soon became the seat. Jan Matsys, Frans Floris, Martin De Vos and the two Franckens, as well as two of Rubens's masters and many others, belonged to the school of the Romanists, to give them the name they had chosen themselves.

The early Flemish painters were the direct descendants of the illuminators. All the practices followed by these mediaeval artists in the designs traced by their brush on the parchment, their minute execution, the accumulation within a narrow frame of a faithful representation of all the details of the scene of the action, their habit of raising their characters and subjects against bright and pleasant colours, their simple faith in the doctrines and legends of religion; to the van Eycks and their successors these were dogma, inspiring them with superior powers of pictorial creation. Throughout a whole century Flanders, and Bruges in particular, saw the production of a series of master-pieces in which an art of great refinement translated, by means of brilliant colours, idealised figures and sober attitudes, the conceptions of deep faith and the realities of life.

Then came an abrupt change. The brilliant renown of the Italian masters of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries had crossed the Alps, and soon after 1500 the exodus of our young

painters to the country they called the Promised Land of their art had begun. The works they went there to admire answered to an artistic conception diametrically opposed to that of our early painters. It was entirely pagan ; it looked no longer for its inspiration to the supernatural world as Christianity had conceived it. What the new art admired had ceased to be saints dematerialized by asceticism and sublime by faith, or a God transformed by humiliation and suffering into the man of sorrows ; it was now the healthy body, harmoniously developed,



THE ANNUNCIATION  
(Imperial Museum, Vienna).

with powerful muscles, beautiful attitudes and graceful gestures. It drew its models from ancient art ; its saints were the gods whom Greece and Rome had worshipped. It peopled its Paradise with beings made like the dwellers on Olympus. The masters of the new school no longer aimed at perfect execution in the minutest details, the precious finish of an illumination, pleasant expression and brilliant colour ; the greatest of them strove for a powerful interpretation of life, and the endowment of line with nobility and beauty. Colour to them was an accessory ; the essential thing was the drawing. Exact observation of reality they found unattractive, and they had no love for the petty particulars of the external world. They simplified form to attain to general beauty ; from what reality showed

them they chose the essential feature, and sacrificed detail for the sake of condensation and unity. As artists and as men they were descended from the ancient Romans who themselves were formed by the culture of Greece. The Renaissance, which had brought the literature and sculpture of the ancients back into light and honour, turned the art of Italy in a new direction ; and it was to Italy that our sixteenth century artists went to form themselves on the model of the admirers of antiquity.

« We know », says van Mander, the painter-author, who belonged to that school, and related the history of his predecessors and contemporaries in a book which he published in 1604, « we know that of old the queen of cities, haughty Rome, the populous and flourishing, was adorned with beautiful statues most artistically made and equal in number to the inhabitants ; marble and bronze, shaped by a marvellous art, had put on the forms of fair bodies of men and animals. We know, too, that furious war, gnashing her teeth in envy, more than once laid her brutal hands upon this noble city, ravaged it and trampled it under foot » in her lust of destruction. But when at length Rome began to bloom anew under the

- » peaceful government of the Popes, they found in her ancient soil some of the fair statues of
- » marble and bronze which I have just mentioned; and these, coming forth from the darkness
- » and appearing in the light of day, were to our painting like a gleaming dawn, and opened
- » the eyes of those who practised it, teaching them to distinguish beauty from ugliness and to
- » discern in life and nature the sovereign beauty of the human body and the limbs of animals.
- » Thus enlightened, the Italians were enabled to understand the true character and perfection



OTHO VÆNIUS — THE TRIUMPH OF THE CHURCH  
(Schleissheim Museum).

- » of plastic form before our Netherlanders, who, being accustomed to a certain manner of
- » working and possessed of but imperfect knowledge, laboured continually to do better, but,
- » by being content to imitate common life, remained, so to speak, in the darkness until Jan
- » van Schoorel brought to them something of Italy and laid before their eyes the means of
- » improving their art » (1).

Frans Floris calls Schoorel « the guide and the torch of the arts in the Low Countries ». But men were not content to praise the pioneer, they followed in his steps and went to Italy to study the works of the princes of the school of the south. When they arrived there, the fifteenth century masters had said their last word, and their path was followed no more.

(1) CAREL VAN MANDER: *Het Schilder-boeck*, 1618, fol. 154.



Raphael, Michael Angelo, Leonardo de Vinci, Mantegna, the greatest of the great, reigned without rivals. These were the men who won the admiration of our Flemings, and whose works they took for their models. The masters of the Venetian school, with whom, as colourists, they had a certain kinship and whose direction was that which their development would more naturally have followed, were not at the time of the first exodus, in the enjoyment of the renown they were to achieve later, and we cannot find that they exercised any appreciable influence over the earliest of our Romanists.

According to van Mander, Schoorel, who was born in 1495 and died in 1562, was the first in point of time of the masters of the new school. That may be true of the northern parts of the Low Countries, where the author lived; but in the southern parts several painters had crossed the Alps before Schoorel. The most remarkable of these was Barend van Orley of Brussels, born about 1490. It has been said that he had worked in Raphael's own studio. Moreover van Mander himself states that when Schoorel reached Venice he found several Antwerp painters there, among whom he gives the name of Daniel van Bomberghe. We know nothing of the works of these first emigrants from Antwerp. The earliest of their fellow-citizens to undergo the influence of the southern genius was Jan Matsys, son of the great Quentin who always remained faithful to the old national traditions. Jan Matsys derives from both schools at once; he produced works in a bastard and clumsy style, in which Flemish asceticism and Italian sensuousness were combined in mawkish insipidity.

The first to follow the footsteps of the Italian masters with resolution was Frans Floris, in whom we have already seen a disciple of Schoorel; after attending the studio of Lambert Lombard, the Romanist, born at Liège, he went to finish his studies in Rome. In his eyes the study of the handsome nude figure, of the human body well made and elegant in attitude and gesture, had become the principal thing, while to colour, the triumph of the early school, he attached little importance. An admirer of Michael Angelo, he studied eagerly the forms of the muscles and was not averse from making a display of his knowledge. He admired Raphael no less and swore allegiance to his example in the study of beautiful forms. Thus it happened that he yielded to the deplorable tendency to combine the manners of different masters, without possessing the powerful originality of those, who, while making use of other men's discoveries, succeed in remaining themselves, and after being the disciples of masters become masters in their turn. Proceedings of this kind led, with most of our Romanists, to unfortunate results.

Frans Floris was admitted a master in the Guild of St Luke in Antwerp in 1540. From that year may be dated the predominance of the school of Antwerp in Flemish painting. And not only in painting but in the other domains of art also. Frans's brother, Cornelis de Vriendt, to whom we owe the Town hall of Antwerp and the tabernacle of Zout-Leeuw, was the greatest of our architects and sculptors. Vredeman De Vries, who came from Holland to settle in Antwerp, and Pieter Coecke of Alost, who also took up his abode in our town, were the apostles of a new architecture, based on the rules of Graeco-Roman art, and made Antwerp the home of the Renaissance in architecture. Christophe Plantin, the great printer from France, introduced the ornamentation of books in the Franco-Italian style. The army of engravers who worked for him, and the men who made engravings after the canvases and drawings of the school, Wierix, De Jode, van den Passe, the elder Galle, and many others, made Antwerp the

engraving market of Europe. We may see from the summary given by Cornelius Grapheus at the end of his account of the Triumphal Entry of Philip II into Antwerp, in 1549, how large a number of artists there already was in Antwerp at that date. Among the 1726 workers who were employed on the triumphal arches he reckons 233 painters and 102 sculptors. The number of masters received every year into the Guild of St Luke also shows how painters were multiplying in our city. From 1540 to 1554 they numbered on the average twenty a year, and twice as many between 1555 and 1664.

After a century of increasing prosperity and general progress, Antwerp entered on a period of twenty years of disaster. The devastations of the iconoclasts, the rage of Spain and of France, civil war, the siege of the town, the heavy contributions exacted by foreign governments and no less by the defenders of liberty and independence, the uncertainty of the morrow and the sombre vistas of a calamitous future, filled the cup of trial to overflowing and arrested all progress and all intellectual cultivation. But the capture of the town by the prince of Parma in 1585, which seemed destined to deal it the final blow, proved no obstacle to the speedy recovery of its place of honour in Flemish art. Not that that place was, in itself, a very lofty one, nor the productions of that art remarkable. On the contrary, after 1585, just as twenty years earlier, the imitation of the Italians was carried on with no native originality to relieve it. But activity became general once more; Antwerp kept her good name, and manifest signs soon proved that foreign tendencies were not alone held in honour by artists and amateurs, and that the current of nationality, though hidden, was by no means dried up.

After Frans Floris, who turned out a number of pupils, Martin De Vos (1531-1603) rose to the leadership of the school. He was a painter of extraordinary fertility, devoted to graceful forms, and thence led into feebleness and bad taste; but he knew what colour could do, and though he was unhappy in the use of the pleasant tints he affected, he had the merit, none the less, of putting an end to the reign of drawing without colour.

Martin De Vos was succeeded by a group of painters belonging to the Italian school: Bernard de Ryckere (died in 1590), Frans Pourbus (1545-1581), Jan Snellinck (1549-1638), Frans Francken the elder (1542-1616), Wenceslas Coberger (1557-1635), Abraham Janssens (1575-1632), Martin Pepyn (1575-1643). In some of their works, and especially in the portraits of Frans Pourbus, Bernard de Ryckere and Adriaen Key, good workmanship, recalling the earlier tradition, is still to be admired; but in general they were practised draughtsmen and mechanical colourists for whom art had become a means of livelihood, to be learnt from some master, and never raised above the level of manual dexterity. Some were cleverer than others, but the artistic level of them all is very low.

Happily they do not constitute the whole of the school; side by side with them we find the successors of Joachim de Patinir, the landscape painters Gilles van Coninxloo (1544-16..?), Mathias Bril (1550-1584) and Paul Bril (1556-1626), Joost de Momper (1564-1635) and Jan Breughel (1568-1625). These latter, it is true, saw nature through glasses which beautified by diminishing it; but they advanced along their own lines, and handled the brush with rare ability. They owed nothing to foreign influence, and the art they founded was destined in the following century to become the glory of the Low Countries.

The men who took their subjects entirely from reality, who followed the guidance of their

love of truth rather than any aim at beauty, and remained faithful to Flemish traditions, had the merit, not only of being more than mere imitators, but of being artists at heart. They formed a small and compact body, which included Pieter Aertsen, Pieter Huys, and Joachim de Beuckelaer, and had at its head the elder Pieter Breughel, one of our greatest masters. He proved himself a colourist in a higher degree than his fellow-workers in art; disdaining to please by any agreeable insipidity of shades, but struck by nature's most delicate tints as much as by her strongest colours, he succeeded in giving them in all their force and splendour. His works occupied a place of honour in Rubens's collection, and there is no doubt that he exercised a salutary influence on the great master of the succeeding century.

But it is time to turn to Rubens's masters, and learn to know them a little better.



TOBIAS VERHAECHT. — Engraved by C. van Caukercken after Otho Vænius.

TOBIAS VERHAECHT. — Tobias Verhaecht or van Haecht was born, according to the inscription on his portrait painted by Otho Vænius and published by Jan Meyssens, in 1566; according to his own statement in 1561 or 1562. (1) He went to Italy, where, as De Bie informs us, he worked at Florence at the court of the duke, and later in Rome. In the latter city he painted, among other things, a fresco of the Tower of Babel. Returning to Antwerp in 1590, he there married Susanna, daughter of Jan van Morckenborch, the step-father of Jan Rubens, Peter Paul's father. Between 1591 and 1612 we find mention in the registers of the Guild of

St Luke of eleven young painters, more or less known, who served their apprenticeship with Tobias Verhaecht. Rubens does not appear among their number. Nor are his periods with his two other masters mentioned in the books of the guild of the painters of Antwerp.

Tobias Verhaecht painted landscapes with figures; De Bie says that Sebastian Vranck sometimes drew these figures, but it is probable that they were more frequently Verhaecht's own. Little of his work has survived. The Brussels Museum has a landscape of his, representing the Emperor Maximilian I hunting and signed with the painter's monogram and the date 1615. It shows a mountainous scene with brown rocks and trees of a brownish green in the foreground, rocks and blue-green trees in the middle distance, and in the distance rocks and a sky of bluish grey. The figures are hard in colouring, in the style of those of the elder De Momper, Bril, Valckenborch and Patinir. The Suermondt Museum at Aix-la-Chapelle has a smaller painting (N<sup>o</sup> 142) on copper, bearing the same monogram and the date 1613. It represents a mountainous country with two horsemen passing through a village. At the castle of Gaasbeek in Brabant there is a Tower of Babel of his; he painted many of them according to De Bie. The Albertina collection at Vienna has a drawing with his signature « Tobias

(1) F. JOS. VAN DEN BRANDEN: *Op. cit.* p. 385.





STUDY OF A LION  
(National Gallery, London)

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(1) *De Bie, op. cit.*, *Recherches*, Col. 10, p. 294.

#### STUDY OF A LION (National Gallery, London)









Verhacht, which represents a rocky landscape with tower-shaped pine-trees, a bridge over a river and rocks that rise like mountains.

All three are exactly alike, and a very small result for a man who worked as much and enjoyed a certain notoriety. In 1595 he was dean of the Guild of St Luke. Meyssens and De Bie proclaim him a great artist. Several of his works obtained the honour of being engraved. Thence it is we know his *Four parts of the day*, Morning, Noon, Evening and Night, engraved by Egbert van Panderen, and his *Four Ages*, the Age of Gold, the Age of Silver, the Age of Bronze and the Age of Iron, engraved by Jan Collaert; the *Four Elements*, also engraved by Collaert, and four Sea-pieces, published by Hendrik Hondius. The figures play a great part in these engraved works. But the landscape is cut on the old pattern: rocks, ruins, steep mountains with their outline so sharply silhouetted that they look as if they had been cut out of a sheet of tin, cold light, pale colour, in short nothing natural. If Rubens attended the studio of Verhaecht it was only by chance; he did not stay there long and kept no trace of it. When, later, the pupil painted landscapes himself, he was to take the opposite direction to his master and dispel for ever the school to which Verhaecht belonged.



ADAM VAN NOORT.  
Etching after Antony van Dyck

ADAM VAN NOORT. — It was not chance but pre-meditated choice that took him to Adam van Noort. Van Noort unquestionably had the gift of attracting pupils. The registers of the Guild of St Luke give the names of 33 whom he received between 1587 and 1627; they do not mention the most illustrious of all, and of the names to be read there, that of Jordaens alone reached great celebrity. Three artists of little worth, Fernand Apshoven, Rombout Eynhoudts and Hendrik van Erp are the only others of his pupils whose names are found elsewhere than in the registers. It is quite true that the title of master to the two greatest painters of his time is enough to make him famous, or at least to mark him out for our consideration. What was the exceptional quality to which he owed this power of attracting pupils? Had he opened up a new road? Had he revolted against superannuated traditions and become the standard-bearer of revolution and progress? Or was it that, without posing as an apostle of reform, he was richly enough endowed for his gifts to command admiration and imitation?

We cannot answer any of these questions in the affirmative. We know little of the man, and still less of the artist. He has benefited by our ignorance, for the extraordinary merit of two of his pupils and the large number of the others have led to his being himself declared an exceptional artist.

The inscription on his portrait published by Meyssens puts his birth at 1557; according to a document discovered by F. Jos. van den Branden, he states that on the 18<sup>th</sup> June, 1607, he was forty-five, which would put the date of his birth in 1562. His father was an italianizing

painter of little merit. He himself married, before the 12<sup>th</sup> November, 1586, Elizabeth Nuyts, who came of a family in easy circumstances; he owned some fortune and died leaving eight houses (1). Of his six children, the second, Catharina married, on the 15<sup>th</sup> May, 1616, one of her father's pupils, Jacob Jordaens. The young couple went to live with the bride's parents in the Everdystraet. In 1634 we find the two families still living together in the Hoogstraet (2). He died in 1641.

Meyssens says that he was renowned for the superb compositions that might still be found in the possession of amateurs (3). De Bie dilutes into bad verse the following sentences, in connection with the portrait of van Noort, the first he gives in the Golden Cabinet :

« Van Noort practised his art in so skilful and beautiful a way that many minds were astonished at it. Lovers of art admire his manner, in which he shows at once his boldness and his maturity. »

His contemporary Sandrart states that he won great celebrity from his large figures, and that he executed many remarkable works which, in the writer's day (1675), bore witness to his gifts. Descamps says that he was held in high esteem, and that he executed many great works for which he was highly paid. We know for certain that he often drew for the engravers and that several of his compositions were engraved on copper. Thus it is that we know his « Life of St Catherine » in 32 small plates engraved by Adriaen Collaert, « The Five Senses » and an « Orpheus », also engraved by Collaert, an « Adoration of the Shepherds » and two plates representing Italian and German nobles, published by the widow of Gerard de Jode, a « Christ in the House of Nicodemus », a « Concert of Music » by Pieter de Jode, and a « Christ on the Cross » by Raphael Sadeler. In two publications of the Plantin press we also find small engravings after his designs.

The list shows that he was of some importance in his own day; but it must be observed that all the old historians say of him is very vague, that none of his works are named, and that we have no certain knowledge of any of his paintings. When we go on to reflect that he reached the age of eighty years, that he lived at a time when pictures were painted in great numbers for churches, and that we possess a quantity of works by all his contemporaries who enjoyed any celebrity, it seems very strange that history should mention no commission of any importance that he fulfilled, and that no work of his should be mentioned either in the catalogues of art collections or in the descriptions of churches. It amounts to evidence that his fame did not survive him, and rests on no proof.

None the less, there have been efforts made of late years to see in Adam van Noort the artist who paved the way for Rubens and Jordaens. In the absence of any pictures of his that might be cited to establish the relationship between the master and his disciples, a certain number, of unknown origin, but remarkable for brilliant colour and vigorous drawing, were attributed to him. Canvases which revealed the peculiar characteristics of the talent of his

(1) P. GÉNARD : *De nalatenschap van Adam van Noort*. (*De Vlaamsche School* 1869. P. 50).

(2) Adam van Noort ende behondtsone Everdystraet. (Funeral roll of Jan Moretus II, 1618). Adam van Noort en Jordaens Hoogstraet (Funeral roll of Melchior Moretus, 1631. Archives of the Plantin-Moretus Museum).

(3) Was a painter renowned for magnificent arrangement, as may be seen from divers works in the possession of amateurs. (Inscription under his portrait).



pupils were baptized in his name, in order to show that it was from him they drew their distinctive characteristics.

To appreciate the influence he had on Rubens, it would be necessary to know his true manner; but the works that might reveal it are extremely rare. We know several drawings of his. The Plantin-Moretus Museum has nine, drawn for engraving in the *Sacrum Oratorium* of Biverus (1634) and five others, engraved in the *Thesaurus Precum* of Saillius (1609). The latter bear his monogram A.V.N. In the Albertina there are three subjects taken from the life of Christ which have the legend *Adam van Oort fecit*. The Louvre has 18 drawings, attributed to him, six of which are dated from 1584 to 1605. In the Boymans Museum at Rotterdam there is a « Pallas teaching the fine arts », dated *A.V.N. 1598 Adam van Noort*.

We have seen already that none of his pictures are known for certain. All the attributions that have been made are arbitrary. Thus the « Adoration of the Shepherds » in the XV Mysteries of the Rosary in the church of St Paul at Antwerp, which all the guides to the town attribute to him, is ascribed to Cornelis De Vos in the list of these fifteen pictures which was made in 1651, the only ancient document that touches on them. To-day he is credited, on no evidence whatever, with the « Christ calling the children about Him », in the Brussels Museum which has been ascribed in succession to Gilles Coignet and a painter unknown. The case is the same with another picture of the same subject in the Museum at Mainz, signed with a name, which, though illegible, is certainly not that of Adam van Noort. The same observation applies to various pictures to be seen in the Antwerp churches, which of late years have been placed under his name because their manner recalled that of Rubens and Jordaens. (1).

There is no resemblance between any of the works that have been represented as his. Some are distinguished by the insipidity of their drawing and colouring, like the two examples of « Christ calling the children »; others like the « Jesus in the house of Martha and Mary », in the Lille Museum, recall the manner of his father by the dryness of the forms and the tone; others again are absolutely insignificant, like the « Descent of the Holy Spirit » in the convent of the Beguines, and the « Descent from the Cross » in Antwerp Cathedral. There are others, finally, in which vigour degenerates into roughness, which might be held to justify their attribution to the master of the most vigorous of our painters; of this class are the « St Jerome », belonging to the trustees of the Antwerp hospitals, or the « Tribute money » in the church of St James in the same town. All these works belong to several manners as different from each other as possible, and have no common features, so that it is impossible to think of attributing them to a single hand.

Van Noort's drawing and the engravings made after his drawings and pictures are equally devoid of anything that can turn our thoughts to Rubens. From the point of view of

(1) The case of the « Descent from the Cross » belonging to the governing body of the Antwerp hospitals shows the uncertainty of the origin attributed to these pictures. This was one of the works relied on to demonstrate the resemblance between the manner of A. van Noort and that of Rubens and Jordaens. But Heer Geudens, keeper of the archives of the governing bodies of the hospitals has recently discovered, in the registers of the bedesmen, a note which shows that, on the 27th September, 1679, Jordaen's son-in-law made a gift to the poor of this picture, painted by his father-in-law, as well as a sum of 150 florins, the late Jacob Jordaens having always been well inclined towards the poor.

composition his book illustrations do not differ from the innumerable works of the same description which were produced, at the end of the xvi and the beginning of the xvii centuries, by the draughtsmen of the Antwerp school, and which, though no doubt showing facility and dexterity, reveal no extraordinary talent. The engravings made after his pictures show a study of elegance in the figures and draperies which recalls rather the manner of Martin De Vos or Hendrik Goltzius than that of a younger school. The drawings of his which we possess do just as little to reveal either a reformer of art or an exceptionally gifted artist; they merely

show a clever hand with no salient merit. We may conclude, therefore, that the first principles were all that Rubens learnt in his studio, and that Adam van Noort exercised no sensible influence on the future development and the original manner of the great artist.

This was not the case with Otho Vænius, his last master, whose studio he entered in 1596, to leave it only in 1600. Rubens was nineteen when he cast off from Adam van Noort, and, considering his rare abilities, there is no doubt that from that date he was an able and distinguished artist. If he decided to serve a further apprenticeship, it must have been because he saw in Otho Vænius the man under whose direction he could find the opportunity of satisfying his longing for instruction and self-improvement in many of the branches of his art. And in our opinion he was not deceived.



OTHO VÆNIUS. — THE FOUR PENITENTS BEFORE CHRIST  
(Mainz Museum).

OTHO VÆNIUS. — Otho Vaenius, or van Veen, was born, according to Valerius Andreas, at Leyden in 1556 (1), and according to the author of the legends on the portraits published by Jan Meyssens, in 1558. His father Cornelis was a knight, Lord of Hogeveen, Desplasse, Vuerse, etc. and descended from a natural son of John III, duke of Brabant; in 1565 he was burgomaster, in 1570 and 1571 governor of the orphans in Leyden. In October 1572 he escaped from the town. The rising against Spain had then spread widely in the north; Cornelis van Veen remaining faithful to the king and the church, believed himself no longer safe in his native town and sought refuge in Antwerp. When, in the following year, Antwerp in its turn was threatened by the Gueux, the pusillanimous gentleman sought an asylum in Liège. His son Octavius, or Otho, who had received his first lessons in painting at Leyden,

(1) VALERIUS ANDREAS : *Bibliotheca Belgica*. — JOANNES-FRANCISCUS FOPPENS : *Bibliotheca Belgica*.

then became apprenticed to the painter-poet Dominic Lampsonius (1). In 1576 the young artist set out for Italy, where he became, in Rome, the pupil of Federigo Zuccaro, who represented, poorly enough, the then profoundly degenerated school of Rome, but enjoyed, like his brother Taddeo, a considerable reputation. There he stayed for five months and then returned to Liège, passing through Germany. At Vienna he worked for the Emperor, and at Cologne he obtained the title of painter to the Elector, a title which we find mentioned on the engraving by Pieter Perret after his picture: « Pleasure and virtue contending for a young man ». After the capture of Antwerp by the Prince of Parma in 1585, Otho Vænius returned to the southern Low Countries, where the governor conferred upon him the title of engineer and painter to the court of Spain. On the death of the prince of Parma (3<sup>rd</sup> December, 1592) he came to settle in Antwerp, where he was enrolled in 1594 as a master of the Guild of St Luke. In the same year he married Maria Loets, and soon acquired a great reputation. He worked for the churches and for the communal administration. He was one of several who were commissioned by the magistrate to undertake the triumphal arches which decorated the town in 1594 on the occasion of the entry of the Archduke Ernest; in 1599 he was again charged with the decoration of the town for the entry of the Archdukes Albert and Isabella. In 1620 he was living in Brussels, where, from 1612, he filled the post of Director of the Mint, and where he died on the 6<sup>th</sup> May, 1629.



OTHO VÆNIUS — Engraved by E. Ruchol after Gertrude van Veen.

The name of Otho Vænius seldom appears in the registers of the Guild of St Luke; and only four men, all completely unknown, are mentioned there as his pupils, although he unquestionably had a larger number. We have already said that among the four names there entered, the name of Rubens does not appear. The great pupil doubtless occupied a special place in the master's studio, which he entered at a comparatively advanced age, and where he remained two years after he himself had obtained the title of master. In fact we find in the registers, under the year 1598: « In the year one thousand five hundred and ninety-eight, were rectors of the » Guild of St Luke Adam van Noort, dean, and his co-dean was Pieter Bom, and hereafter » follow the masters and sons of masters whom he received in the course of his year ». The twelfth on the list is « Peter Rubens, master-painter ». There is no cause for surprise in the fact that only the first of his two Christian names is mentioned here; he was often so designated in his youth. We know, however, that from about that time those who knew him well called him Peter-Paul, which also appears from a declaration made before the aldermen of the city of Antwerp on the 24<sup>th</sup> November 1589. Rubbens continued to be written instead of Rubens, at various periods of his life. He himself always signed Peter-Paul Rubens.

(1) P.-J. VISSCHERS : *Iets over Jacob Jonghelinck, Octavio van Veen en de gebroeders Collyns de Nole*. Antwerp, 1852, p. 18. — F. JOS. VAN DEN BRANDEN : *Op. cit.* p. 402 et seq. — TH. VAN LERUS : *Catalogue of the Antwerp Museum*, 1874.



As an artist, Otho Vænius is well known; we have a number of authentic pictures by him; many engravings were made after him, especially plates for publication with a text of his own composition. Among his principal works we may mention his four pictures in the Antwerp Museum: « Zaccheus in the fig-tree », « Matthew called by Christ to follow him », and two « Charities of St Nicolas »; the « Crucifixion of St Andrew » in St Andrew's church in the same town; the « Last Supper » in the church of Notre-Dame; the « Resurrection of Lazarus » in the church of St Bavon at Ghent; the « Adoration of the Shepherds » in the cathedral at Alost; « Christ and the Four Penitents » in the Mainz Museum; « Typus inconsultæ Juventutis » (the type of thoughtless youth) in the Stockholm Museum; the same subject in the Cologne Museum; « Calvary », the « Bearing of the Cross », and « St Catherine » in the Royal Museum at Brussels; the « War of the Batavians » in the Royal Museum at Amsterdam; the « Triumph of the Catholic Church », a series of six pictures, and the « Life of Our Lady », in five small pictures, at Schleissheim; and finally a number of portraits in Antwerp and Vienna. The Louvre has his portraits of his parents and brothers collected into one composition; the Albertina, a portrait-drawing of Giulio Romano and another of the Archduke Albert; the British Museum, a drawing of his own portrait before a mirror; and the Cabinet of Prints in Berlin has some drawings representing scenes in the life of Jesus Christ.

From this long list we are enabled to gain an idea of his manner, which is well worthy to attract our attention. Otho Vænius had taste; his composition is simple, clear and elegant; he definitely broke away from the accumulation of numbers of figures which characterizes his predecessors in the school of Antwerp. The latter crowded as many people as possible into their canvases, and made most of them prominent; Vænius sought to unify his composition, placing the principal figures in evidence and leaving the rest to the middle distance. He followed the same principle in his use of colour, replacing his predecessors' medley with a harmony of tones; he obtains his effects, not by the brilliancy of his colours but by their happy arrangement. He tries to combine nature and beauty; his figures are finely built and blooming with health; but that manly and healthy beauty he sought to express by the perfect conformation of the limbs and the opulence of the flesh rather than by vigorous and clearly exhibited muscular structure; his heads and limbs are lovingly rounded, and show perfect formation. His colour is still dull; he aims at agreeable effects at the expense of vigour and truth. He has not yet learned to throw off the affectation that characterized the early Romanists; but he surpasses them in his escape from awkwardness and stiffness of attitude, and in the art with which he succeeds in softening violent tones. His was not the genius of a creator, but his lessons must have exercised a good influence in an art which was governed by mannerism and affectation, in which salvation was seen nowhere but in the imitation of foreign models, and conviction and creative power replaced by mere dexterity.

Otho Vænius was not only an artist with the brush; he drew admirably, found his subjects for himself and commented on them in verses in various languages. In 1607 he published the « Emblems of Quintus Horatius Flaccus » (*Q. Horatii Flacci Emblemata*) in 103 plates; in 1608, the « Emblems of Love » (*Amorum Emblemata*) in 124 plates; in 1610 the « Life of St Thomas Aquinas » (*Vita B. Thomæ Aquinatis*) in 30 plates; in 1612, the « War of the Batavians and the Romans » (*Batavorum cum Romanis Bellum*) in 36 plates,

a subject which he also treated in 12 small plates, now in the Amsterdam Museum, and the *History of the Seven Children of Lara* (*Historia septem infantium de Lara*) in 39 plates ; in 1615, the *Emblems of Divine Love* (*Amoris divini Emblemata*) in 60 plates ; in 1624, the *Emblems or Symbols proper to be used by Noble Persons whether ecclesiastical, military or other* (*Emblemata sive Symbola a principibus viris Ecclesiasticis ac Militaribus aliisque usurpanda*) in 23 plates. These engravings reveal the characteristic features of Otho Vænius's manner. In the figures, more especially in the figures of children in the *Amorum Emblemata* and the *Amoris divini Emblemata*, we again find in the highest degree the taste for soft and rounded form which characterized him ; but the scenes of the *War of the Batavians against the Romans* have a vivacity of treatment and a vigorous action which are not to be found in his pictures.

By a comparison of these features, we can form a just idea of Otho Vænius. He was of distinguished birth, esteemed by all both as man and as artist, a man of learning and letters, with a cultivated and refined intelligence ; one who had seen many things and had shone in the world, one who had been exceptionally favoured by fortune and had earned his success by his talents and the love and conscientiousness which he carried into his many undertakings. His portrait, painted by his daughter Gertrude, represents a handsome man with a distinguished air, a sweet expression and an intelligent glance, calm in the consciousness of his own worth.

We will draw no comparison between his art and that of his pupil, the vigour of the latter and the studied grace of the former, the exuberance of one and the moderation of the other ; but we find in the pupil so many of the features that characterized the master that Otho Vænius appears as a point of transition between the art of earlier days and that of Rubens. There can be no question that Rubens learned a great deal from his last master, and remembered his lessons in Italy and after his return ; the more we study the work of Otho Vænius, the more convinced we become of that truth ; Philip Rubens was justified in writing to de Piles that the pictures painted by his uncle before his departure for Italy bore some resemblance to those of Otho Vænius.

We have little information about the date of his various works, and we do not know for certain that these were what he was producing at the time when Rubens was working under his direction. We know enough, however, to form an idea of what the pupil of genius must have learnt under his last master. It was in 1607 and after, that Vænius drew and published his engraved plates, with the exception of the *Amorum Emblemata*, with which he said he had occupied himself in his youth. But before that date he had painted the *Contention of Pleasure and Virtue* engraved by Perret, his *Christ in the house of the Pharisee* engraved by Hieronymus Wiericx, and his *Alexander of Parma led to battle by Religion* engraved by brother Gishert. His *Marriage of St Catherine* in the Brussels Museum is dated 1589, and his *Martyrdom of St Andrew*, in the church of St Andrew in Antwerp, was finished in 1599, while Rubens was working under him.

The *Marriage of St Catherine* is a picture distinguished from his later works by a definite aim at agreeable and brilliant tones, alternating with twilight effects ; the desire to give pleasure is still predominant. The *St Andrew*, of ten years later, shows the artist in all the force of his maturity. The unity of composition, the harmonies of light and colour, the finished,

yet bold, painting, and the happy balance between the parts show that he had found his path and was treading it with a firm foot.

Rubens must certainly have admired Otho Vænius for his wide mental culture, at which he himself ever aimed, and that superiority in speech and manner which won a welcome at court for both master and pupil; and from Vænius he must have learned to take an interest in things to which artists paid no attention whatever in those days; letters, learning, and history. Otho Vænius inspired his pupil with that love of symbolism, of which Rubens gave so many proofs



THE TRIBUTE-MONEY  
(M. Dufour, Sydney).

in his works. They worked together on the monumental decoration of the town on the occasion of the entry of Albert and Isabella in 1599, and Rubens thus prepared himself for the magnificent creations he produced for the entry of their successor in 1635; he listened to his master's enthusiastic talk about Italy and her great artists, and thus prepared himself for his journey across the Alps.

In his art, specifically mentioned, the professor taught the disciple to know the value of sensible arrangement and a clear and easy representation, to love well-nourished bodies and plump flesh, opulent beauty and blooming health.

Rubens, indeed, transformed all these lessons into his own manner, and made genius out of the talent of his master; but the impression he received in the studio of this distinguished man was never effaced. And when, on his return from Italy, he began to throw off the foreign influences he had undergone and to become a Fleming once again, he went back once more, in 1613-1615, to the manner of Otho Vænius.

The subject of one of Rubens's most important works, the « Triumph of the Holy Sacrament » had been painted by his master in a series of six pictures, now in the Museum at Schleissheim, which represent the « Triumph of the Church ». We find also the « Four Penitents », but treated quite differently, in a picture by Otho Vænius in the Museum at Mainz. Rubens's interpretation of these subjects is far from being, as some have claimed, a mere copy of his master's; but we cannot doubt that he drew his first ideas from the creations of the latter.

WORKS OF RUBENS DURING HIS APPRENTICESHIP. — At the age of twenty-three, when Rubens left the studio of Otho Vænius, he had already made himself a name not inferior to that of his master. The author of the *Vita* says so, and we may take his word for it, though



the proofs are lacking. The opinion of Philip Rubens is confirmed by a passage in the will of the painter's mother, dated the 18<sup>th</sup> December, 1606, where Maria Pypelinckx says, in speaking of her furniture : — I give to my two sons the cooking utensils and everything else as they are at present, as well as all the books, papers and writings belonging to me, with the pictures in my possession which are only portraits ; the other pictures, which are beautiful, belong to Peter Paul, who painted them(1). It would be impossible to speak more clearly. Before his departure for Italy, therefore, Rubens had painted several beautiful pictures, which he had left with his mother. From the terms of the will we may conclude further that they were not portraits, as we might have supposed had not Maria Pypelinckx herself been careful to distinguish between the pictures belonging to her, which are only portraits, and her son's works, which are beautiful.

Unfortunately our knowledge of these youthful works does not extend to the subjects they represented nor to their ultimate fate. When Rubens came back from Italy in 1608, he found in his mother's house the pictures



PAUSIAS AND GLYCERA  
(Duke of Westminster, London.)

he had left there. Perhaps he repainted them, unless indeed he destroyed them as unworthy to bear his name. But here we are completely in the land of hypothesis, and have no desire to venture too far on such uncertain ground.

Let us note what positive information we have discovered about these early works, and add a few conjectures that appear probable.

The Imperial Museum at Vienna has an *Annunciation to the Virgin* by Rubens (*Œuvre*, No 143), which was formerly in the Sodality of the Jesuits at Antwerp, whence, on the abolition of the Society, it was carried, in 1776, to the capital of Austria. The picture was engraved by Schelte a Bolswert, who put this dedication on his plate : To the illustrious Great Sodality of

(1) P. GÉNARD : *P. P. Rubens*. pp. 372-373.

the learned men under the protection of the holy Virgin, which formerly procured this picture of the Annunciation to the Virgin to be painted by Rubens, and preserved and venerated it in their oratory in the professed house of the Society of Jesus in Antwerp, Martin van den Enden now holds it his duty to dedicate this engraving of it on copper – (1).

The building of the Sodality, where the picture was preserved until the eighteenth century, was begun in 1622, a year after the completion of the Jesuits' church. The Jesuits had left their old convent, where the original Sodality was, in 1607 (2). The picture therefore was painted before 1607, or after 1622. One glance at the picture is enough to show that it was not later than the last of these dates. Rubens, therefore, had painted it before his departure for Italy. When the 'Annunciation to Our Lady' was engraved, in the life-time of Rubens, it was known as a work executed some time before, since Martin van den Enden was careful to engrave on his plate that the picture had *formerly* been painted by Rubens, a statement which is found on no other engraving. The work is characterized by a certain stiffness and hardness. The Virgin is rising from her prie-Dieu, and to express her amazement throws herself backward with a studied movement; the archangel Gabriel kneels before her in an affected attitude, his left hand lies on his knee, his right is extended towards the Virgin Mother, the stuff in which he is draped is puffed out and raised from behind with an exaggerated movement, five plump angels hover in the air, while the Holy Spirit descends upon Mary in a glory. The colours are markedly different from those which Rubens employed later: the Virgin's robe is white, her cloak blue lined with lilac, the angel's robe is prune-coloured, with yellowish lights, his under-garment is green, his drapery orange, and the grey ground of his wings has greenish tints. Such colouring, indeed, lacks harmony, all the more for being hard and loud. The shadows are grey, without the blue and brown shades, which Rubens mixed with them later. He shows his love, already, for strong, rich tones, but the choice he makes of them is not yet happy; the blended tints of his later works are still lacking. His figures are already robust in structure without yet being easy of movement; the small angels that hover in the clouds show most resemblance to his own definitive manner, they have plump bodies, delightful little curly heads and little mischievous mouths that demand to be kissed. They are first cousins to the little chubby loves of Otho Vænius.

Rubens treated the same subject a second time in a picture belonging to the Dublin Museum, which only differs in trifling details from that which he painted for the Sodality of the Antwerp Jesuits. Once again he painted an 'Annunciation to Our Lady' on the outer face of the shutters of the 'Martyrdom of St Étienne' which is in the Valenciennes Museum; finally, he treated it in three compositions which are only known to us by engravings or descriptions.

When Rubens, in 1612, drew his 'Annunciation to the Virgin' (*Œuvre*, No 1252) for the Breviary of the Plantin Press, he introduced several happy modifications, while preserving the same general arrangement. The Virgin is still throwing herself back, but with a calmer and

(1) Perillustri Sodalitati Partheniæ Majori litteratorum quam ipsa Virgini Annuntiatae tabulum Rubeniana manu quondam depingi curavit et in Oratorio suo ad Domum professam Soc. Jesu Antverpiæ colit veneraturque; hanc in aes incisam Martinus van den Enden officii causa D. C. Q.

(2) PAPEBROCHUS : *Synopsis Annalium Antverpiensium*. Edidit I. V. S. O. P. Antwerp, Beerts, 1884. pp. 32, 36.

less violent movement; there is more reserve in the angel's expression, which is no longer that of a messenger conveying an invitation, but that of an adorer, kneeling out of respect; the angels are freer in their movements; they are sportive, and scatter flowers with infantine sprightliness.

A second picture painted, in our opinion, about the same time, is the « Pausias and Glycera » in the collection of the duke of Westminster in London (*Œuvre* N° 867). It represents a painter in antique dress, showing his mistress a panel which he has just finished. She is sitting on the ground and admiring her lover's work in silent contemplation. An attempt has been made to see in these two figures those of Rubens and Isabella Brant. The man, indeed, has certain points of resemblance with what Rubens must have been in the days of his youth, but the Glycera is not like the painter's first wife. Flowers bloom at their feet. The young woman holds a garland in her hand, and there are bouquets of flowers by her side. Pausias wears a slate-coloured tunic, over which is thrown a bluish cloak; his mistress wears a red robe covered with white gauze. The painting is firm, the outlines clear, the colours fresh and the light sweet. Taken as a whole, the work is ambiguous, and it is difficult to assign it to either of the painter's manners; but if we reflect that he painted himself as a young man and gave himself the same attitude in the portrait of 1609 in which he appears with Isabella Brant, we may conjecture that this picture of lovers is a souvenir of some happy day, that he painted it before his departure for Italy, and that he entrusted Breughel de Velours, who had returned to Antwerp in 1597, with the painting of the flowers we see in it. There is no doubt that the « Rubens and Isabella Brant » (*Œuvre*, N° 1050) in the Munich Pinakothek is related to the « Pausias and Glycera ». In both the man is sitting with crossed legs by the side of a woman towards whom he is leaning, while she sits lower down and turns her head towards him. In both compositions the young couple are surrounded with flowers. In the later picture the love-scene borrowed from the painter's youth has become the representation of wedded happiness.

The supposition that the flowers in the picture of « Pausias and Glycera » are by Breughel, is based in the first instance on the execution itself, and secondly on an almost certain tradition, that Rubens, while at work under Otho Vænius, often had recourse to the clever brush of his fellow. In fact, the keeper of the archives of Antwerp has discovered the following entry in an old inventory: « A picture painted by Octavius (van Veen) Breughel and Rubens, representing Mount Parnassus » (1). Unfortunately this canvas has disappeared, and not a trace of it is left. It is evidently not the « Parnassus with Minerva and the Muses » in the Berlin Museum.

In the estate of Abraham Matthys, who died in 1649, we find mention of the « Portrait of Rubens in his youth, painted by himself » (2). This picture, also, has never been discovered, supposing that the youth of Rubens means an age of less than thirty years.

We will avoid the danger of losing ourselves in other suppositions which would throw little light on the works of Rubens during his apprenticeship, and prefer to pass in silence over other works of doubtful authenticity. But two canvases, which evidently belong to the same

(1) F. JOS. VAN DEN BRANDEN : *Op. cit.* p. 409.

(2) *Ibid.* p. 634.



epoch, deserve mention : « Christ teaching Nicodemus », in the possession of Madame van Parijs of Brussels, and the « Tribute-money », the property of M. Dufour of Sydney. In these two compositions taken from the Gospels, the characteristic Jewish heads of the apostles are noteworthy ; both are brilliant in colour but hard and coarse in expression. The lighting of the two pictures is not the same : the « Nicodemus » is seen half by artificial light, half by sunlight ; in the « Tribute-money » there is a strong contrast of light and shade ; they are by no means mature works, but they show ability and the promise of a brilliant future.

Philip Rubens wrote expressly to de Piles that the pictures painted by his uncle before his departure for Italy showed some resemblance to those of Otho Vænius ; and though we must regret that he did not go on to give the grounds of his opinion, we must agree that it is supported by every probability. When he crossed the Alps, our painter took with him some of the pictures he had painted at Antwerp, and showed them at Venice to a gentleman in the service of Vincenzo de Gonzaga. What these pictures were we are nowhere told ; but it seems very probable that the « Hercules drunk » and the « Triumph of Virtue », which passed from the collection of the Duke of Mantua into that of the Elector of Saxony and are to-day in the Museum at Dresden, may have been of the number.

Rubens's apprenticeship in Antwerp was long, and if we cannot admit that he learned much from his two first masters, it is certain that he drew great profit from the lessons of Otho Vænius. He studied, for no less a time and with no less zeal, the lessons of the great Italians of former days, and their example was more useful to him still. But he succeeded so well in assimilating and transforming by his personal conception and his creative power the stores which he owed to his Antwerp and Transalpine masters alike, that his originality lost nothing under foreign influence, but proved, when he himself became a master, to have been purified and ennobled by earnest study.



FARM CALLED HET KEYSERSHOI — Drawing (Lately in the Collection of Sir Charles Robinson, London).



Portrait of a Man  
Drawing (Albertina, Vienna)

apostle, deserve mention : — Christ teaching his disciples — at the possession of Madame van Pans at Brussels, and that *“Tribute-money”* — the property of M. Dutour of Sydney. In these two compositions taken from the Gospels, the stately count Jewish heads of the apostles are noteworthy : both are brilliant in colour but hard and want in expression. The lighting of the two pictures is not the same : the *“Nisabenean”* is seen half by artificial light, half by sunlight ; in the *“Tribute-money”* there is a strong contrast of light and shade ; they are by no means mature works, but they show ability and the promise of a brilliant future.

Philip Rubens wrote expressly to de Piles that the pictures painted by his uncle before his departure for Italy showed some resemblance to those of Otto Varnius, and though we must regret that he did not go on to give the grounds of his opinion we must agree that it is supported by every probability. When he crossed the Alps, his uncle took with him some of the pictures he had painted at Antwerp, and showed them at Venice to a gentleman in the service of Vincenzo de Gonzaga. What these pictures were we are nowhere told : but it seems very probable that the *“Hercules drunk”* and the *“Triumph of Virtue”*, which passed from the collection of the Duke of Mantua into that of the Elector of Saxony and are to-day in the Museum at Dresden, may have been of the number.

Rubens's acquaintance with Antwerp was long, and if we cannot admit that he learned much from his uncle, the training of his genius must be traced more truly from the lessons of Otto Varnius, the greatest he ever had, a man who was not only king, the master of the great Italians of former days, and their pupils, who were masters in their turn, but he succeeded as well in assimilating and transforming by his personal example and his constant access to the stores which he owed to his Antwerp and Transalpine masters alike. Thus the composition was nothing under foreign influence, but proved, when he himself became a master, to have been purified and ennobled by earnest study.



Philip Rubens, after Vermeer. — Drawing (Portrait of the painter) in the collection of the Albertina, Vienna.

**PORTRAIT OF A MAN**  
Drawing (Albertina, Vienna)









THE CASTLE IN THE OLD PALACE OF MANTUA

## CHAPTER II

### RUBENS IN ITALY

RUBENS SETS OUT FOR ITALY — VINCENZO DE GONZAGA — MANTUA — RUBENS IN FLORENCE  
 RUBENS IN MANTUA — THE ITALIAN PAINTERS IN 1600 — RUBENS IN ROME — HIS SECOND  
 VISIT TO MANTUA — HIS FIRST JOURNEY INTO SPAIN — HIS RETURN TO MANTUA —  
 HIS SECOND VISIT TO ROME — RUBENS AT GENOA — THE LAST MONTHS OF RUBENS'S  
 STAY IN ROME — WORKS EXECUTED BY HIM IN ITALY — HIS STUDIES AFTER THE ITALIAN  
 MASTERS — THE INFLUENCE OF ITALIAN ART UPON RUBENS — HIS FORMATION.



HEAD OF A FAUN  
 Drawing — Louvre, Paris.

**R**UBENS SETS OUT FOR ITALY. — On the 8<sup>th</sup> May, 1600, Rubens presented himself at the Town-hall of Antwerp before the Burgomasters and Aldermen, and having informed them that he intended to set out for Italy in order to improve himself in his art, he asked them for a certificate affirming that Antwerp was not subject to any contagious disease and that he himself was healthy of body. They hastened to grant his request, and the clerk who drew up the oath was careful to mention, as a title of honour for the young artist, that his father had sat for long years and not without renown, in that same Town-hall, as an Alderman. The young man was provided with a document in Latin, to the following effect:

The Burgomasters and Council of Antwerp to each and all who shall see these presents, greeting! We hereby express our desire and attest it by these presents,



that, by the benevolent providence of God, this city and its suburbs breathe a healthy air, and no plague nor contagious disease reigns herein. Further, since it has been represented » to us on the date hereinafter written by Peter Rubbens, son of Jan, formerly a magistrate of this city, that he is on the point of setting out for Italy on his business, and in order that he may come and go everywhere without difficulty nor suspicion of sickness, and especially of contagious disease, seeing that he himself, as all this city, is exempt by the grace of God from all plague or other contagion : therefore we, the Burgomasters and Council aforesaid of the city of Antwerp, being invited to give testimony of the truth, have delivered to him the present certificate, having placed thereon the seal of this city of Antwerp. Dated this eighth day of May, 1600 .

« And », says the author of the *Vita*, « on the 9<sup>th</sup> May, 1600, he set out for Italy, urged by his desire to see that land, in order to admire near at hand the most celebrated works of the ancient and modern artists, and to improve himself by their example in painting ».

We do not know what road he followed to reach the lands of his dreams, and the matter is not one of much interest. The *Vita*, again, gives us the first information we possess about his journey : — Arrived at Venice », it says, « chance found him a lodging in the same place as a gentleman of Mantua in the service of Vincenzo de Gonzaga, duke of Mantua and Monferrato, to whom he showed some of his pictures. The gentleman, in his turn, showed them to the duke, a great lover of painting and all the fine arts, who took him immediately into his service, and there he stayed seven years ».

As Rubens returned to Antwerp from Italy in October, 1608, this statement would imply that he entered the service of the duke of Mantua in 1601, the year after his arrival in the peninsula. On the 20<sup>th</sup> April, 1628, Rubens himself wrote to Pierre Dupuy that he had spent nearly six years in the service of the Gonzaga family. But that statement is as inexact as the other. It is true that, as Philip Rubens informs us, the gentleman of Mantua, who had met the painter in Venice, showed his works to the duke. It is more than probable that while Rubens was in Venice, the prince also was there with his court, and that it was then that he saw the pictures. Now we know that Vincenzo was at Venice in 1600, from the Thursday before the 15<sup>th</sup> July to the Wednesday after the 22<sup>th</sup> of the same month, and that on the 5<sup>th</sup> October following he was present in Florence at the marriage by proxy of Marie de Medici, his wife's youngest sister, with the king of France, Henri IV (1). We know, further, that Rubens was an eye-witness of the same event, and that he was present not only at the religious ceremony but also at the banquet given on that occasion (2). It is certain that the young artist could only have been admitted into this princely society as painter to the bride's brother-in-law, and we consequently take it as proved that he met the duke of Mantua and entered his service a few weeks after his arrival in Italy. Whence, also, it follows that he spent not six nor seven, but a good eight years in the service of the prince.

(1) ARMAND BASCHET : *Pierre-Paul Rubens peintre de Vincent I de Gonzague duc de Mantoue* (Gazette des Beaux-Arts, 1866 I, p. 409.

(2) Letter from Rubens to de Peïrese, 27 October 1622.

VINCENZO DE GONZAGA — MANTUA. — Vincenzo de Gonzaga reigned over one of the eleven or twelve states of which northern Italy was composed at the beginning of the seventeenth century, and over the duchy of Monferrato in Savoy, which had been granted to one of his ancestors in 1536 by the Emperor Charles V. He was born on the 2<sup>nd</sup> September 1562 of Gulielmo de Gonzaga and Eleonora, daughter of the Emperor Ferdinand I. He succeeded his father in 1587. In 1581 he married Margarita, daughter of Alessandro Farnese, duke of Parma, from whom he separated two years later. In 1584, he married Eleonora de Medici, elder sister of Marie de Medici who later became queen of France. The Italian princes of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, like the Popes of the same period, are noted in history as generous and enlightened patrons of the arts: the Medicis in Florence, the Sforzas in Milan, the Estes in Ferrara, and the Farneses in Parma took pleasure in surrounding themselves with artists and adorning their palaces with master-pieces of painting and sculpture. The Gonzagas of Mantua occupied one of the highest ranks among these princely amateurs. One of Vincenzo's ancestors, Ludovico III de Gonzaga had summoned Andrea Mantegna to Mantua in 1459, where the great master of the first Italian Renaissance worked almost uninterruptedly till his death in 1506. Giulio Romano, the greatest of the pupils of Raphael, had been summoned to Mantua in 1524 by Federigo III, and he too worked in the duke's service till his death in 1546. These two painters and a legion of artists in all branches built and decorated the two ducal palaces whose equivalents it would be difficult to discover anywhere.

The old palace in which Rubens lived, or which he at least frequented, during long years, had been built in 1302 for Guido Buonacolsi; the castle was added in 1395 by Bartolomeo de Novara for Francesco IV de Gonzaga. Mantegna decorated most of the rooms; in 1474 he painted the « Camera dei Sposi », in 1494 he completed the superb series of the « Triumph of Caesar » which excited the admiration of Rubens to such an extent that he made a copy of it. In 1490, when Isabella d'Este, wife of Giovanni Francesco de Gonzaga, marquis of Mantua, came to live in the old palace, a number of large and small rooms were added which made it one of the most sumptuous palaces of the Renaissance. Mantegna painted two pictures for the apartments of the marchioness, Lorenzo Costa two others and Perugino a fifth, which were bought by Cardinal Richelieu and are now in the Louvre. The chamber in which three of those pictures were hung, itself a gem of the most dazzling luxury, was reproduced as one of the finest examples of decorative art, and is now exhibited in the South Kensington Museum. Giulio Romano added to the palace a wing containing sixteen rooms, which he and his pupils decorated with fresco-paintings.

The sumptuous building was sacked by the Spaniards in 1630, and served later as barracks for the Austrian garrisons. It fell into utter ruin; but the work of restoration is now being carried on. Even in its present deplorable condition it still appears grand. It is impossible to form any idea of the extent and magnificence of this abode of an insignificant princeling. There is no imperial or royal residence to-day that could compare with it. Interminable suites of rooms, chambers without number, gardens on the ground-level and others raised on terraces to the height of the first storey, a tilting-ground for tournaments, a « naumachy » or artificial lake, immense halls, minute closets and every one of them decorated with frescos, with mural ornaments in marble or stucco, and with sculptures, after the designs of Pinturicchio.

The gallery and loggias were decorated with exquisite grotesques in the style of Raphael, and the large and smaller rooms with numerous historical paintings by Mantegna and Giulio Romano, and their pupils. The whole has been stupidly spoiled by the hand of man and heavily injured by time; but everything in the place still eloquently recalls an unheard-of luxury and the noblest feeling for art.

The second of the princely residences, the Palazzo del Te, was built in one on a single plan. It was far more regular, but nearly as sumptuous as the old castle. The vigorous art of Giulio Romano reigns there undisputed. It lacks the refinements of the early Renaissance, which give an irresistible charm to the little rooms in the Palazzo Vecchio and reveal such



VINCENZO DE GONZAGA  
(Signor Tamassia, Mantua).

delicacy of taste; but it displays the creative genius of an artist who, at one swift and powerful stroke, conceived, executed, and decorated a residence worthy of a wealthy prince and lover of the arts. When Giulio Romano arrived in Mantua in 1524, the palace was completely built; the great pupil of Raphael decorated a large part of it with his frescos: the History of Cupid and Psyche, the « Fall of the Titans », and several others. His collaborators in the decoration of the new palace were Primaticcio, who furnished the designs for several of the works in stucco, Luca di Faenza, who painted a number of landscapes, il Fattore (Giovanni-Francesco Penni) and several other painters, who worked under the direction of Giulio Romano (1).

The Palazzo del Te is in good preservation, but empty, uninhabited and solitary; it seems dead, and is no more than the shadow of what once it was. As for Mantua, it is

now a little provincial town, cheerful and prosperous but quiet and modest, lying amidst the lakes formed by the Mincio around its ramparts. There are few considerable buildings to be seen there, and the only things which catch the eye are the arcades running along the ground-floors of the houses in the streets and round the principal squares, which have columns in all styles and all dimensions, apparently escaped from ancient pagan temples or mediaeval cathedrals. All the wealth, all the art and all the life of the duchy were concentrated in the two palaces, one of which, the Palazzo Vecchio, stood in the middle of the town, and the other, the Palazzo del Te, which was used as a summer residence, a little way outside the walls.

Like his predecessors, Vincenzo de Gonzaga was a great amateur and a generous patron of the fine arts, and of painting in particular. He commissioned his representatives or other confidential persons to buy the works of the greatest masters in all parts of Italy; his collections enjoyed universal renown, and at the beginning of the XVII century people went to Mantua to admire the duke's artistic treasures, as later they went to Florence to see the galleries of the Medicis there. After the death of Vincenzo and the capture of the town by the imperial forces, in the war arising out of the succession to the duchy in 1630, the precious

(1) STEFANO DAVARI: *Palazzo del Te*. (L'Arte, II, p.p. 248, 392).



objects that adorned the palace were pillaged; but already, in the preceding year, the reigning duke had sold the collection of pictures formed by his predecessors to the king of England for the sum of £ 80,000. In the catalogue of the Gallery of Charles I of England we find the following mentioned among others as coming from Mantua : « The Punishment of Marsyas » and « The Triumph of Virtue over Vice » by Correggio; « The Triumph of Julius Cæsar » a « Madonna with Saints », and « The Death of the Virgin » by Mantegna; the Madonna called « La Perla » and the « Portrait of Frederigo I, duke of Mantua » by Raphael; eleven pictures by Giulio Romano, a « Madonna » by Andrea del Sarto; the « Entombment » and « Christ with the disciples at Emmaus », which now belong to the Louvre, and four other pictures by Titian, not to mention a number of works by second-rate masters.

Duke Vincenzo was not only a collector of pictures and a patron of painters, his taste for the arts was eclectic; he collected antique statues, objects of Chinese art, Flemish tapestries, musical instruments from Cremona, and Dutch tulips; he employed German engravers, weavers, and silk embroiderers; he searched for all that was rare and precious, in order to buy it. He loved poetry and openly declared himself the friend



ELEONORA DE GONZAGA AND HER CHILDREN  
(Count d'Arco, Mantua).

of the most illustrious of the poets of his day, Torquato Tasso, whose release he procured from the lunatic asylum in Ferrara, where he was confined, and whom he carried off to Mantua. He had attached to his court a troupe of comedians renowned throughout Italy and even in France; he was in relations with musicians and scholars. He was, therefore, a man of taste. Unfortunately he only showed his leaning towards science by entertaining astrologers and alchemists. Religion he understood in a very peculiar fashion; while he was having the portraits of the most beautiful women of his time painted for his collection, he was at the same time having copies made of all the miraculous images of the Virgin. His admiration for beautiful women was not confined to painting; the models enjoyed equal favour. He had the passion for gambling also and lost much money through it. He was always travelling, now to take part, with his magnificently equipped forces, in a campaign against the Turks, as in 1596, 1597, and 1601; now to be present, with a brilliant train, at processions or at the weddings of foreign princes, as he was in 1598, when, with a following of two thousand men, he visited Pope Clement VIII who had just taken possession of Ferrara. Sometimes, too, he travelled for his pleasure and health; and thus he visited the Low Countries in 1599 and 1608. In a word, he was the most gorgeous, and the most lavish,

prince of his time, with the greatest enjoyment of life, equally insatiable in the pursuit of the noblest pleasures and the grossest lusts. He was skilled in affairs of state, and brave in war, of handsome appearance and pleasant manners. With his qualities and his defects, he was the most enlightened and most magnanimous patron that Rubens could have found in the Italy of that time.

The duke had evidently an affection for Flemish painters. In 1598, there was one at his court already, only known to us under the name of Jan; in the following year he engaged Frans Pourbus the younger, whom he summoned to Mantua on the 10<sup>th</sup> August, 1600, shortly after he had met with Rubens, and who, after living for ten years in that city, was called to Paris, in 1610, by Marie de Medici.

RUBENS IN FLORENCE. — Rubens was appointed court-painter by Vincenzo de Gonzaga at Venice in the second half of July, 1600, and did not long defer his departure for Mantua. As we said above, at the beginning of the following October he was at Florence in the train of the prince. Vincenzo arrived there on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of that month, to attend the provisional marriage of Marie de Medici with Henri IV, king of France; the ceremony took place on Thursday, the 5<sup>th</sup> October, with what luxury may be conceived; we can imagine also the splendour displayed there by the gorgeous Vincenzo. In the evening there was a ball, followed by a sumptuous supper. Rubens was present at the wedding which was celebrated in the church of Santa Maria dei Fiori, and also at the entertainment, which took place at the palace. His presence there was of wonderful service to him, when, twenty-two years later, he had to paint the religious ceremony for the gallery in the Luxembourg palace in which he was bidden to represent the history of Marie de Medici. In the letter written to him on the 27<sup>th</sup> October, 1622, by another eye-witness, his friend Nicolas de Peiresc, we read as follows :

« I heard with pleasure that you were present at the marriage of the queen at the church of Santa Maria dei Fiori and in the banquetting-hall; I thank you for reminding me of the Iris who appeared at table in company with a Roman Victory dressed as Minerva, and who sang so well. I regret that in those days we were not joined by the friendship which unites us to-day » (1). There is no doubt that Vincenzo had taken his new painter with him to Florence, and it is probable that he had summoned Frans Pourbus into Italy to employ him, on the occasion of these *fêtes*, in painting the portraits of the ladies present, or of other people of distinction.

We may infer with sufficient certitude from a letter which his brother Philip wrote him from Padua on the 18<sup>th</sup> December, 1601, that, before his departure for Rome that same year, Rubens had already visited several of the towns of Italy. « I should be glad to hear, » writes Philip, « what you think of Venice and the other Italian towns, nearly all of which you have visited » (2).

Rubens spent about a year in Mantua, but we do not know what he did there. The first information we have of his doings occurs in a note from the duke to Cardinal Montalto, the

(1) MAX ROOSES AND CHARLES RUELENS : *Correspondance de Rubens*, III, p. 57.

(2) Ibid. II. p. 39.

nephew of Pope Clement VIII, a man of great influence, who was directing the affairs of state for his uncle together with another nephew of the Pope's, Cardinal Pietro Aldobrandini. Vincenzo writes to him, on the 18<sup>th</sup> July, 1601, that he is sending his painter Peter-Paul, the Fleming, to Rome, to make copies of pictures there, and demands for the artist the protection of the prelate. « This evening », he says at the close, « I set out for Gratz, whence I shall depart for the theatre of war in Croatia ». Rubens, therefore, had received orders to go and work in Rome during the duke's absence, or rather he had been given leave of absence to go and prosecute his studies in the pontifical city.

In a postscript to a letter written on the 14<sup>th</sup> September, 1601, by Lelio Arrigoni, one of the duke's agents in Rome, to Annibale Chieppio, then secretary and later minister of state to Vincenzo, he states that Rubens had presented himself before him a few days before, to take fifty crowns on account of the hundred which Arrigoni was charged to pay him every time the artist might ask him for them. (1)

Rubens, then, left Mantua in 1601 for Rome, the Holy City of the painters of that time, which, no doubt, he too had long been aspiring to visit.

THE ITALIAN PAINTERS IN 1600. — When Rubens crossed the Alps in 1600 the Golden Age of Italian art was over. The favoured ground, in which the most brilliant school of painting had flourished for a hundred and fifty years, seemed to have lost its fecundity of artists of genius and was producing nothing but second-rate talents. The masters then living, therefore, had but little to teach Rubens, though that did not prevent them from exercising a certain influence over him. But at the beginning of the seventeenth century the whole of Italy had become an immense museum, where visitors from the north might find master-pieces to admire in every town, every palace, and every church. Since then artistic marvels have been carried across the Alps by hundreds; how rich Italy was at that time in pictures of the first order may be seen clearly enough from the contents of the museums of Europe, added to those artistic treasures that have remained in the peninsula. Venice, where Rubens first stayed, possessed in her churches, her convents, the halls of her brotherhoods, and her public and private palaces innumerable canvases, rich in colour and ablaze with light, the work of the brushes of her early masters, Crivelli, the Bellinis, Vittore Carpaccio, Cima da Conegliano, and many others, and of her new masters, Titian, Palma, Giorgione, Paris Bordone, Tintoretto, and Paolo Veronese. At Padua there were the works of Giotto and Mantegna to admire. Milan had Lionardo da Vinci's and Bernardino Luini's. Florence, the capital of Italian art, prided herself on the possession of innumerable frescos and pictures, beginning with Masaccio, going on with Giovanni da Fiesole, Fra Filippo Lippi, Sandro Botticelli, Filippino Lippi, Cosimo Roselli, Domenico Ghirlandaio, and Fra Bartolomeo, and ending with Andrea del Sarto: all the great school of draughtsmen and idealists. At Pisa, in the Campo Santo, were the paintings of Benozzo Gozzoli; at Parma, the works of Correggio. Bologna possessed Francia's; Mantua, Mantegna's and Giulio Romano's; Rome, Michael Angelo's and Raphael's, and those of their predecessors and successors, who had worked in the Vatican. Master-pieces of painting were not all that claimed admiration in Italy; the brilliant phalanx of the sculptors and architects of

(1) *Correspondance de Rubens*, I, pp. 28-30.



the fifteenth to the seventeenth centuries had covered the soil of their country with creations the like of which could nowhere be found. The admiration excited by Italy, therefore, in Cisalpine countries was justified; and though we may regret it from the point of view of our national school of painting, we can easily understand the irresistible influence exerted by this incomparable treasure-house of artistic marvels. Rubens was not content to give them his passing admiration; he studied them long and seriously, and copied many in drawing or painting. We shall see later what action they exercised upon him, what masters he took for his models and what works he imitated or recalled in after times.



ST. HELEN DISCOVERING THE TRUE CROSS  
(Chapel of the Hospital at Grasse)

The artists of the Renaissance were not the only thing that drew the northern artists into Italy; the master-pieces of antique sculpture exercised an invincible attraction on the most cultivated among them. Rome possessed marvels of this order; the temples and theatres of antiquity, the triumphal arches and columns that adorned the public places, and the marble statues that peopled the palaces and gardens of the Popes, the prelates and the patrician families, made the eternal city the paradise of the lovers of ancient art.

At Rome Rubens met the most celebrated masters then living: Agostino Carracci, who had arrived in 1597 and died there in 1602; his brother Annibale, who arrived the same year and

died in 1609; Guido Reni, who stayed there on his first visit from 1598 to 1604 and then returned from 1605 to 1612; Francesco Albani, who lived there from 1600 to 1616; Domenico Zampieri, who worked under Annibale Carracci from 1600 to 1608; and Caravaggio who stayed in Rome till 1606. All these painters, with the exception of Caravaggio, belonged to the school of Bologna, the last to flourish in Italy, whose originality consisted in having none. Its leaders, whom we have just mentioned, were men who replaced art by reasoning, reflexion and study. They claimed to have freed themselves from the failings of their predecessors while appropriating all that they found best in their qualities. With them this wisdom took the place of conviction and good sense of sensibility; and their talent was composed of work, taste and cleverness. They borrowed beauty from Raphael, strength from Michael Angelo, light from Correggio, and colour from Titian; they tried to combine the most diverse qualities of these masters of genius into a harmonious whole, to unite all their perfections into one. They purposed to avoid the feebleness and exaggeration of their models; they must needs be without faults, as perfection must be; they were the normalians of art, the convinced interpreters of academic dogma, the apostles of balance and moderation. But the avoidance of all excess is itself excess. Their prudent and deliberate ways, which were to preserve them

from all exaggeration, unhappily stifled the fire of inspiration in them, and the impulse of personal conception ; their worship of moderation condemned them to mediocrity. They are cold, and they leave us cold. They were not lacking, of course, in talent, nor their works in merit ; but their talent has an element of inferiority, of negation.

The last of the living masters whose acquaintance Rubens made in Rome was Michael Angelo Merisi da Caravaggio, who was born in Lombardy in 1569, and came to Rome early. He was not a member of the Bolognese school ; instead of following masters or a school and seeking perfection in the noble style and academic beauty, he devoted himself to the study of



THE ELEVATION OF THE CROSS  
(Chapel of the Hospital at Grasse).



CHRIST CROWNED WITH THORNS  
(Chapel of the Hospital at Grasse).

nature and gave his mind to the exact representation of reality. Subjects borrowed from everyday life did not seem to him to be unworthy of his brush, and when he sought inspiration in the Bible, he gave the preference to scenes of suffering and sorrow ; in his maturity he tried to make the principal figures stand out by painting them on a very dark background. To the timidity and insipidity of the academic school of his time he preferred the truth and vigour of life, strong emotions, sharp contrasts of light and shade, and subjects of violent pathos. The Bolognese did not spare him any more than he conciliated them.

As it often happens, Caravaggio's manner had the attraction of novelty ; he found imitators, and at the end of the sixteenth and beginning of the seventeenth centuries we can reckon a whole series of painters who painted black. The Bassanos had paved the way for Caravaggio ; after him came the school of the *tenebrosi* ; Guercino, Salvator Rosa and the Spaniard Ribera, who was living in Naples, to name only the best known. All loved moving subjects and violent action. They did not shrink from the horrible, and, up to a certain point, sought beauty in ugliness.

But the Bolognese also had made a great stride towards reality, towards the reproduction

of life as a whole, and they had enlarged the domain of art. They no longer confined themselves to painting idyllic scenes drawn from the Gospels : the Madonna and saints, the visit of the Virgin Mary to Elizabeth, or the coronation of the Mother of God, which their predecessors had repeated again and again; on their canvases, the Virgin gave place to the hero of the Gospels, the Redeemer; the dramatic side, the passion of the life of Christ, became their chosen theme. Pure and celestial light was replaced in their work by obscurity, which became an important element in pictorial art.

RUBENS IN ROME. — Rubens arrived in Rome in the early days of August, 1601; he most probably stayed there till the beginning of April, 1602, that is full eight months: he would have needed that time to see much and execute several works. The note sent by the duke of Mantua to Cardinal Montalto shows that our painter had been sent to the pontifical city to make some copies and pictures for his patron; what, we do not know. Fortunately, we are better informed on the principal work which Rubens executed at Rome for the Archduke Albert, who was then governor of the Spanish Netherlands, and to whom he had been recommended by Jean Richardot.

The Archduke Albert was the son of the Emperor Maximilian II, grandson of the Emperor Charles V by his mother Mary of Austria, and therefore nephew of Philip II. He was born on the 15<sup>th</sup> November, 1559, and destined for the ecclesiastical life; when he was eighteen Pope Gregory XIII made him cardinal, and immediately afterwards he was raised by the king his uncle to the dignity of Archbishop of Toledo and Inquisitor-general. Later, Philip II entrusted him with the government of Portugal, which had been conquered by the duke of Alva. In 1595 he was placed at the head of the government of the Spanish Netherlands; and on the 6<sup>th</sup> May, 1598, the king gave him the hand of his favourite daughter and granted to the husband and wife the sovereignty of the Low Countries. Philip II died on the 18<sup>th</sup> September following, and the new sovereigns made their entry into our country in 1599. Albert had renounced his ecclesiastical dignities, and the Pope had relieved him of his vows. From the date of his being made cardinal he had borne the title of the church of the Holy Cross in Jerusalem (Santa Croce in Gerusalemme) at Rome. After laying down his orders, he wished to give this church a token of his good will, and at the same time to prove to the Pope the attachment of the new sovereign of the Low Countries, who was somewhat suspected at Rome of an excess of complaisance towards heretical Holland. He resolved to have an important picture painted for the church of Santa Croce in Gerusalemme, and applied by a letter of the 8<sup>th</sup> June, 1601, to Jean Richardot, his representative at Rome. He bids him see that the work of which there had already been some talk between them, is done as well as possible, since, he adds, you assure me that it will not cost more than a hundred to two hundred crowns.

The ambassador was the son of Jean Grasset de Richardot, who fulfilled the high functions of president of the privy council of the archdukes, and he was in intimate relations with the Rubens family. Philip Rubens, Peter Paul's brother, had been secretary to the president, whose son Guillaume he had accompanied in 1601 when he went to continue his studies in Italy. These relations sufficiently explain the choice which the Archduke made of Rubens, whom he did not know, to paint the picture he destined for the church of Santa Croce.



On the 12<sup>th</sup> January, 1602, the duke of Mantua's representative at Rome wrote to his master that the Archduke's ambassador at Rome asks that Rubens may be authorized to carry out the retables which had been ordered of him. On the 26<sup>th</sup> January following, Jean Richardot informs the duke that Rubens has already painted a large picture for the chapel of St Helen, and begs Vincenzo, who had just recalled his painter, to allow him to finish the two smaller pictures destined to complete the work. The permission was granted, and it is not until April that we find Rubens back in Mantua. In about three months he had completed the three great pictures, which were placed in St Helen's chapel in the church of Santa Croce.

The archduke had this chapel restored at his own expense. It contained a high altar and two side altars. For the first Rubens painted « St Helen discovering the true Cross »; for that on the right « Christ crowned with thorns », and for that on the left « The Elevation of the Cross ». The three pictures remained in position till 1763; when that over the high altar, which had been damaged, was taken into the library of the monks to whom the church belonged. In 1811 the three pictures were sent into England, where they were sold in the following year. They became then or later the property of Monsieur Perrolle, who left them to the chapel of the hospital at Grasse, in the south of France, where they still remain (*Œuvre*. Nos 444, 445, 446.)

These three pictures are of moderate size; the centre one measures 8 ft. high by 6 ft. 1 in. wide. The two lateral canvases measure 7 ft. 6 in. by 6 ft.; all three are round at the top. In the first we see St Helen enraptured by the miraculous discovery of the true Cross. She is standing upright, clothed in her imperial robes, a white gown embroidered in gold over which hangs a rich drapery. A dark veil lies over her long hair; in her right hand she holds her sceptre; the left arm is slightly extended. By her side stand or hover seven angels who surround and hold up the Cross; two of them carry the crown of thorns, the shroud and the scroll of the Cross; two others have palms in their hands; a fifth is sitting on the arm of the Cross and holding a crown of laurel over the Empress's head. Through an open arcade there is a view of the landscape and a gallery supported by twisted columns very finely worked.

In the « Christ crowned with thorns » Christ is sitting on a piece of white cloth, his head lying on his left shoulder, in an attitude and with an expression of prostration and profound sadness; his loins are girt with a white cloth. On the left a kneeling soldier offers him the reed; on the right a Roman, in helmet and cuirass, is thrusting the crown on the head of the Redeemer with the aid of a staff. Four other figures are playing a subordinate part in this scene of martyrdom. Above sits Pilate behind a balustrade before which hangs a lighted lantern.

In the « Elevation of the Cross » Christ has his hands nailed to the arms, while his feet are still hanging by the side of the upright, which four executioners, on the left, are in the act of raising. On the other side two men are helping them by hauling at ropes, and a third is trying to pull towards him the cloth which encircles the loins of Christ. In the background one of the murderers is being undressed by an executioner, while the other is already placed on his cross. On the extreme right a bearded officer, with a turban on his head, sits on horseback. At the foot of the Cross the Virgin Mary is supported in a swoon by one of the holy women.

The influence both of the old and the new schools of Italy is clearly evident in this work.

Rubens has borrowed from the painters of *chiaro-oscuro* the brownish flesh, the grey-black shadows and the sharp outlines of his St Helen. The second picture, which is by far the most remarkable, represents a nocturnal scene lit solely by the lantern, the torch and the lamp, the light of which throws into strong relief the fair limbs of Christ, the linen that is being torn off him and the head of the young man who is performing this executioners' work, while the other figures are bathed in a velvety and transparent gloom. In 'the Elevation of the Cross',



LANDSCAPE WITH THE RUINS OF THE PALATINE HILL  
Drawing (Albertina, Vienna).

the shadows are brown and heavy. We find unmistakable marks of the imitation of the great masters of the past in the 'St Helen', which recalls Raphael's 'St Cecilia', and in the 'Christ crowned with thorns', which is no more than a scarcely disguised imitation of Titian's treatment of the same subject in a picture which is now in the Louvre and was then in a church in Milan. For the rest, the three pictures have not the qualities of first-rate work; they do not show as yet either the originality of Rubens nor his marvellous gift of transforming what he borrowed into his own personal creations. He has not as yet either his heroic action or his brilliant colour, he is still timid and awkward in expressing what he had already begun to feel and to attempt to render, his groups are still massed together in an unpleasing way. As early as the eighteenth century the 'St Helen' was removed from the church on account of the bad condition it had fallen into; it was even claimed that 'the Elevation of the Cross'



was only a copy, because it was painted on canvas and not on panel like the other two pictures ; and although we believe all three to be originals, we cannot but admit that the last has seriously deteriorated.

But there is nothing in this to prevent the complete work, the earliest Rubens of which we know the exact date, from being of the greatest interest in the study of the artist's career. It already shows many of the definitive qualities which were later to characterise his genius, and also several of his favourite subjects. « The Elevation of the Cross » introduces us to his grasp of dramatic effect, to his conception of the Roman soldier, his ideal of manly beauty, realised in powerfully muscled bodies, his charming little angels, his rich architecture, his arcades and twisted columns. The great importance he attached to the opposition of light and shade is shown in his choice of three different lights : the light of day in the « St Helen », artificial light in the « Christ crowned with thorns », and the twilight of the eclipse in « the Elevation of the Cross ».

In this last picture he tried to evince an audacity which entirely failed. He represents the Cross as being raised before the body of Christ was completely fastened to it. The taste of the idea is dubious, as Rubens afterwards realised. For the rest, this is the most original picture of the three. That also Rubens realised, when several years later he treated the same subject anew, leaving out its defects, to preserve what he considered its merits. Thus this first « Elevation of the Cross » served as a preparation for the second, and an imperfect work gave birth to a master-piece, the celebrated triptych in the Cathedral at Antwerp. In this last picture the imitation of Tintoretto's « Calvary » is more obvious than in the former, though in that too the influence of the School of San Rocco is unmistakable.



DOMINVS IOANNES VANDEN WOYWER  
*Eq. Toparcha Quenad de Regi Catholico Belli, et*  
*Supremi. Eraru in Belgio a Consilus*  
*Actu in Dyck pinxit. Pict. Fecit J. J. G. H.*

PORTRAIT OF JAN WOVERIUS, after Ant. Vandyck.

RUBENS'S SECOND VISIT TO MANTUA. — In April, 1602, Rubens was back in Mantua, whither the duke had just returned after his expedition into Hungary against the Turks. This time he stayed there about a year. We have no details on his doings there. The most important fact we know is his meeting at Verona, towards the end of June or the beginning of July, 1602, with his brother Philip and Philip's friend, Jan Woverius. After the return of the family to Antwerp, Philip had continued his studies in that town. It is probable that he won distinction early by his more than ordinary abilities, for while still quite young he became secretary to



Jean Richardot, the President of the Privy Council, and at the same time tutor to two of that high dignitary's sons. In 1595 he accompanied his pupils to Louvain, whither they went to carry on their studies, and where he himself attended the Greek and Latin course of Justus Lipsius. He became the favourite pupil of the celebrated professor, whose friend and *protégé* he remained after he had left the university in 1599 to return to Brussels with his pupils. In 1601, he accompanied young Guillaume Richardot into Italy, where he himself continued his studies and obtained the degree of Doctor of Laws at Rome on the 13<sup>th</sup> June, 1603. In 1604 he returned to Antwerp, but in the following year once more set out for Italy, to become librarian to Cardinal Ascanio Colonna. In November, 1606, he returned to his own country, where he was recognised as entitled to the status of a subject of Brabant. From the 14<sup>th</sup> January, 1609, he was secretary of the town of Antwerp; on the 26<sup>th</sup> March in the same year he married Maria de Moy, daughter of Hendrik, first secretary of the town, and died on the 28<sup>th</sup> August, 1611.

Philip Rubens was a scholar after the manner of his day; he knew Latin well and better than his native tongue, and was no less versed in Greek. Like many of the learned men of his time, he occupied himself in correcting Latin texts, and succeeded no worse than the rest; he published the sermons of St Asterius in Greek for the first time, wrote letters in prodigiously learned Latin, and composed verses in all metres in the same language. His fellow-scholars held him in high esteem, and on the death of Justus Lipsius there was serious talk of calling him to succeed the illustrious professor and thus of proclaiming him the first Latinist of his country.

The two brothers were fast friends, and their joy at meeting again in Italy must have been great. "My first desire was to see Italy, my second to meet you again there; the first is fulfilled, and the second, I hope, will soon be fulfilled also"; wrote Philip Rubens, on the 13<sup>th</sup> December, 1601, a fortnight after reaching Padua, to his brother, who had not yet left Rome. His wish was granted. On his return to Mantua in 1602, Peter Paul no doubt went to see his brother in Padua, where Philip remained till the 12<sup>th</sup> July, when he left for Bologna with his pupil. They did not travel thither direct, but made a detour and passed through Verona, which lies not far from Mantua, and where Philip was to meet his brother and their common friend, Jan Woverius or van den Wouwere.

Woverius was a native of Antwerp, a son of alderman Jan van den Wouwere, lord of Neppen. He was born on the 27<sup>th</sup> May, 1576, one year before Peter Paul and two years after Philip, with whom he had lodged and studied under Justus Lipsius. He was bound to his old comrade by close friendship. When a premature death had snatched Philip from his family and friends, Woverius, according to the custom of those times, wrote a long complimentary letter of condolence, dedicated to Peter Paul, in which he calls Philip "your brother and mine" (1). In 1599 he returned to Antwerp, whence he set out in the same year for Paris, and thence for Spain. He spent the two following years at Seville. In 1602 he went to visit Italy, and on the 26<sup>th</sup> June, just before Philip Rubens's departure for Bologna, the latter wrote to him that they would meet in a few days at Verona, and go thence together to Mantua.

(1) Age, vixit frater tuus-meus, (si non alias, ad consortium doloris permitte hanc copulam) atque hinc misere miseri ingemiscimus. (Joannis Woverii de Consolatione liber in PHILIPPUS RUBENS, *S. Asterii Homilia*. p. 144.)

The meeting took place in the first half of July, 1602, and it appears also that Peter Paul went to catch the two friends at Verona, to accompany them to Mantua. In fact, under the first engraving Rubens had made after one of his works, the *Great Judith* (*Œuvre*. N<sup>o</sup> 125) we read the following dedication: ✻ To Heer Jan Woverius, P.P. Rubens dedicates this plate, the first of his works which has been engraved on copper, in performance of a promise made by him aforetime at Verona . The plate was engraved by Cornelis Galle the elder, shortly after Rubens's return to his native country. It represents Judith, standing by the side of the bed on which Holofernes is lying, and cutting off the head of the Assyrian general. We do not know for certain whether the original picture is still in existence, but a canvas which appeared at the Disant sale at Rheims in 1883, is, if not the actual work by Rubens, at least an early and faithful copy. It proves clearly that it was in Italy that Rubens painted his *Judith and Holofernes* ✻. The colossal figures of the characters, the contrast between the strongly lighted faces and the dark ground they stand out from, and the stiff gesture of the Judith, all show this work to be one of the earliest, and it is probable that Rubens was alluding to the reproduction that was to be made of it, when he promised Woverius the dedication of the first engraving that should be executed after one of his pictures.

RUBENS'S FIRST JOURNEY INTO SPAIN. — About a year after Rubens's return from Rome, Vincenzo de Gonzaga entrusted his court-painter with a confidential mission. In the Italy of 1603, the duchy of Mantua was a little state in incessant anxiety for its existence. The troublous times were over when incessant revolutions and wars between the little principalities used to change the map of the peninsula every moment; the condottieri no longer usurped power by force of arms; the foundation and the overthrow, the union and the separation of these minute states were no longer made every-day events by the pushing to extremes of the parcelling out of the land; in Italy, as elsewhere, the political system of the middle ages was giving way to that of modern times. Some of the old reigning houses were still in existence, but they found themselves compelled to play a passive part; the great states had taken the upper hand and were controlling the destinies of the country; the republics of Venice and Genoa, the grand-duchy of Tuscany and the principality of Savoy in the north, and the Papal State in the centre, had become considerable powers, which sought to extend their territories as widely as possible, at the expense of their neighbours. Foreign powers played a large part in the affairs of the country. In the south the very extensive territory of the vice-royalty of Naples, and the rich duchy of Milan in the north, were in the hands of Spain; France and the German Empire were always ready to interfere when they had a difference to allay or arouse. In these conditions, the situation of the lesser sovereigns was often critical and perilous, as we see in the case of Vincenzo of Mantua. His policy consisted chiefly in securing the friendship and protection of his powerful neighbours. More than once he led his forces to the aid of the Emperor in his wars against the Turks; he went to Ferrara with a brilliant train to do homage to the Pope, he was bound to the king of France by family ties, and neglected nothing to win the good will of the king of Spain.

In 1603, Vincenzo found pressing need of the favour of Philip III. Not only did he desire a general assurance of the king's protection, but he wished to be appointed admiral. The office



till then had been in the hands of Giovanni Andrea Doria of Genoa. Doria had fallen into disgrace after the defeat of an expedition against Algiers, and it seemed probable that his functions were to devolve upon some one else. Spain had then, as before and since, Italian princes in her service, and Vincenzo made every effort to be included in the number of these privileged persons. At the beginning of the year he had sent an agent to Madrid to support his candidature, recommending him not to spare money to win over the courtiers. He had

already previously sent offers of works of art and other valuable things to the chief among them and to the king himself ; and wishing now to have recourse to the same means, he found no one in his court so fit as his titular painter, Peter Paul Rubens, to carry his presents into Spain.

On the 5<sup>th</sup> March, 1603, duke Vincenzo advises Iberti, his representative at Madrid, that the presents destined for the court of Spain are ready, and that Peter Paul, the Fleming, his painter, is chosen to accompany them. For the king there was a small coach with six bay horses, eleven arquebuses, six with whale-bone and five rifled, and a vase of rock-crystal with perfumes. The presents for the duke of Lerma included a quantity of pictures, a large silver vase ornamented with figures and containing perfumes, and two gold vases ; for the countess of Lemos there was a cross and two candlesticks in rock-crystal ; for don Pedro Franqueza, two rock-crystal vases and a hanging of silk damask with ornaments of cloth of gold ; for the priest-



PORTRAIT OF PHILIP III, king of Spain,  
after an engraving by Pieter De Jode.

musician who directed the chapel royal the duke had sent a sum of a thousand reals. Among the pictures destined for the duke of Lerma was a portrait of Vincenzo by Frans Pourbus. In an inventory of the pictures of the king of Spain, drawn up later, we find the portrait of the duke of Mantua painted by Rubens. It is now lost, but was probably wrongly attributed to our painter. Bellori, it is true, states that at the age of twenty he had painted the duke and the duchess, but he did not take these pictures into Spain.

The duke of Lerma, then first minister of Philip III, was one of those all-powerful favourites, to whom the incapacity and feebleness of their sovereigns abandoned the direction of affairs in those days, when the decadence of the Spanish monarchy was beginning to be accented. An anecdote then current, which Rubens quotes in his letter to Pierre Dupuy of the 22<sup>nd</sup> October, 1626, shows the boundlessness of his power. Philip III had given audience to an Italian gentleman, whom he sent to the duke of Lerma. If I had been able to see the duke »,



answered the Italian, « I should not have addressed myself to your majesty ». The duchess of Lemos was his sister, and Pedro de Franqueza one of his confidential advisers. Master and servant were equally rapacious. At a time when Spain was sinking and becoming impoverished, the favourite had amassed in a few years an enormous fortune, the income of which amounted to no less than £ 800.000 of our money at its present value. The precious things of all kinds that he had collected were valued at £ 6.000.000. He had earned in addition the surname of the greatest thief (*el mayor ladrone*) in Spain. To obtain anything from Pedro de Franqueza, it was absolutely necessary to bribe him with money and presents. The son of an enfranchised slave, and devoid of all merit beyond an unlimited submission to his master's will, he had obtained the title of Count de Villalonga and exercised a great influence in his unhappy country.

On the same day on which the duke wrote to Iberti, Rubens received his passport and quitted Mantua. We take the story of his journey from the letters he wrote to the secretary of state, Annibale Chiappio. The first of the letters, which is also the earliest of Rubens's we possess, is dated from Florence, the 18<sup>th</sup> March, 1603. He had followed a very singular route : from Mantua he went to Ferrara, which lies well to the east ; thence, bending towards the south-west, he went to Bologna, and then to Florence, which he reached on the 15<sup>th</sup> March. He had many difficulties to surmount on the way. The coach destined for the king of Spain was mounted on a lorry, which was to be drawn over the mountain roads by a team of oxen ; from Bologna to Florence alone the transport cost forty ducats. At Florence Rubens learned that the lorry had not yet arrived, and that he would have to embark for Spain, not at Leghorn but at Genoa. Fortunately he had not been asked to pay dues either at Ferrara or at Bologna ; but, notwithstanding this exceptional good fortune, the money he had been given at Mantua proved insufficient, which put him in a considerable difficulty. He stayed ten days in Florence, detained by all sorts of mischances ; thence he went to Pisa in search of a ship to sail for Genoa. The grand-duke Ferdinand, who was then in the town and had been fully informed by his emissaries on Rubens's identity and the object of his journey, sent him a Flemish gentleman, Jan van der Neesen, who was in his service. Van der Neesen greeted our painter most cordially, and asked him, on the part of the grand-duke, to take charge of a palfrey and a marble table, which were to be sent to Spain to don Juan de Vich, the king's captain at Alicante. Contrary to his expectations, at Leghorn Rubens found a ship ready to set sail for Spain. On Easter-Eve, the 29<sup>th</sup> March, he bargained with the captain, a Hamburgher, to convey him and all that he carried in his train. On the 2<sup>nd</sup> April everything was on board, and they only waited for a favourable wind. On the 22<sup>nd</sup> of the same month he arrived at Alicante,



CAESAR. — Drawing after an antique marble (Louvre, Paris).

where he performed the commission given him by the grand-duke of Tuscany. The next day he started for the interior.

He had doubtless been wrongly informed in Italy about the place of Philip III's residence at that time, for he imagined that he could reach the court in three days. At Alicante he learned that the king was at Valladolid, 320 miles away. The difficult rocks and the mountains he had to cross much retarded his journey, which was rendered still more laborious by the small horses and the encumbrance of the duke of Mantua's coach. Rubens passed through Madrid and the Escorial, where he visited the palace and the convent, and admired the master-pieces of Italian painting that adorned them. That took up still more time. Then the rain and the sudden storms hindered the rest of the journey, which lasted another twenty-one days. It was not till the 13<sup>th</sup> May that Rubens reached Valladolid. He had travelled with Captain de Vich, to whom at Alicante he had handed the presents sent by the grand-duke of Tuscany; the boxes containing the stuffs and crystals were carried on the backs of mules and he accompanied them with the horses which were included among the presents. The waggon containing the pictures and the coach did not arrive till the 19<sup>th</sup> May. The duke of Mantua proved to have been very sparing in his estimate of the travelling expenses allowed to his painter, and Rubens found himself compelled to advance out of his own pocket more than 200 ducats towards the cost.

He was not at the end of the mishaps that were to retard his journey. Valladolid, where he had now arrived, was, it is true, the place where, since 1601, Philip III usually held his court, but at that moment he was not there. Up till the 13<sup>th</sup> May he had stayed in the castle of Aranjuez, then he went to Burgos, where it was impossible to join him. Rubens was compelled to await his return. But this new mishap had its advantages. In unpacking the presents, he found everything in order: coach, stuffs and crystals. Two of the pictures, the « St Jerome » after Quentin Matsys, and the portrait of Duke Vincenzo by Pourbus were intact; but all the other pictures had been much injured by the rain, in spite of their having been packed with care, first in double waxed cloth, and then in a wooden box strengthened with tin, in the presence of the duke and under the direction of Rubens. At Alicante the boxes had been opened at the request of the custom-house officers, and all within found uninjured. But on their arrival at Annibale Iberti's they were completely damaged by damp; the canvas appeared to be spoiled, and decomposed, so to speak; the colour was scaling off and rising in blisters, and it seemed as if the only thing to do was to scrape it all off and repaint it all anew. These pictures were copies made after the works of the great masters, not by Rubens, but by a painter of Mantua, Pietro Facchetti, who was working at Rome for the duke. At the sight of this disaster, Iberti proposed that Rubens should hastily dash off some landscapes with the help of a few Spanish painters, and offer them in place of the damaged copies. The proposition was not to Rubens's taste; besides the lack of time, he knew the indolence and incredible incapacity of the Spanish artists, whose manner, moreover, was entirely different from his own. He was convinced also that the fact that the painting was quite fresh could not fail to be perceived, and he feared that the work of the Spanish daubers might be attributed to him. « I have no wish to expose myself to this », he wrote to Chieppio, « having made a rule never to allow myself to be confused with another, however great. If the work is partly mine, my reputation would

« suffer unduly, because I should be credited with an insignificant work, quite unworthy of the name I have already made here ».

But however great the difficulty may have appeared to Vincenzo's agent and his painter, it was easily overcome. Minute examination of the pictures showed that the damage was not so great as it had been thought at first. When they were dried and washed in hot water, it was clear that a few retouchings would suffice to save the greater number of them. Two only were lost beyond repair. Fortunately Rubens was at hand; he put his best work into the restoration of the damaged canvases, and found time also to replace those that were lost, a head of St John after Raphael and a little Madonna, by a « Democritus » and « Heraclitus », which are still to be seen in the Madrid Museum (*Œuvre*. Nos 797, 798). These two pictures are tall and narrow (6 ft high by 2 ft 2 in. wide) painted swiftly, without brilliance or originality. Heraclitus, the weeping philosopher, sits leaning against a rock, with his head resting on his right hand, his elbow on the rock, his face full of misanthropic irritation. Democritus, the corpulent laughing philosopher, appears still more joyous by contrast; with one hand raised and the other laid on a mask, he seems pleased with himself and the world in general. It was probably on the same occasion that Rubens painted a third picture of the same kind and the same size, now also in the Madrid Museum (*Œuvre*. No 799), which represents Archimedes, with both hands on a sphere, lit with a clear and abundant light. This picture is not mentioned in the letters to the duke of Mantua, but we may presume that it was painted by his emissary to be given to some courtier.

Philip III reached Valladolid on the 1<sup>st</sup> July; but it was not till the 11<sup>th</sup> that he could give audience to Iberti, who offered him the coach, the horses and the arquebuses brought by Rubens. The painter attended the audience; but he was not presented to the king. Two days later the duke's representative and Rubens sent to don Roderigo Calderon 24 portraits of empresses, copied after Titian, which had been brought for him by Rubens.

Next they visited the duke of Lerma to offer him the other pictures; and then there occurred a scene which Iberti relates in full detail in a letter to the duke, and Rubens in a letter to Chieppio. The pictures were set out in a large hall, and in an adjoining chamber, Rubens had placed the « Democritus » and « Heraclitus », and the pictures of small dimensions. The duke of Lerma entered, enveloped in his dressing-gown. After the usual salutations, he examined the pictures one after another, beginning with the « Creation » and the « Planets » painted by Facchetti after Raphael, and passing on to the copies of Titian and others. He gave his opinion on each picture, and took them all, except the « Creation » and the « Planets » for original works.

When he had traversed all the hall, which took him more than an hour, he was informed of the smaller pictures to be found in the next room; he went in and was amazed at the number of remarkable works collected there. He took all the copies for originals, extolled their beauty, pronounced them perfect, and declared that the duke of Mantua had made him the richest and most exquisitely chosen of presents. The duke's representatives took care not to protest against these praises; on the contrary they lauded to the skies the supposed masterpieces, and abstained from undeceiving Lerma, who passed among his own people for a great connoisseur. It was a true comedy scene, one part in which lay on Rubens's conscience.



The Spanish minister had asked Iberti the evening before if Rubens could not paint him a portrait of the duke of Mantua from memory. Iberti had shortly before received one from his sovereign, painted by Pourbus. He added it to the other pictures without saying whence it came. The canvas was received with great satisfaction by Lerma, as were the crystal vases brought by Rubens.

That same evening, the favourite showed all these beautiful things to the king, and the next day, to the queen and her ladies of honour; then he showed them to several of the court lords. All were ravished with them. Calderon informed Iberti that the king had declared to him



ST JOHN THE APOSTLE  
Drawing (Albertina, Vienna).

that some of the pictures were so choice that they ought to be made an inalienable part of the Lerma inheritance. The duke of Arcos, first chamberlain to the queen, and another reputed connoisseur, heaped praises upon them. Lerma, who had lost his wife a few days before, and was preparing, in his sadness and discouragement, to renounce the pleasures and vanities of the world, had the profane pictures taken from his rooms and replaced by the serious compositions of which he had lately become the fortunate possessor. He showed himself very well inclined towards Rubens, and asked him if he would not like to enter the service of the king; and when Rubens replied that on the accomplishment of his mission, the duke of Mantua expected his return, Lerma gave him to understand that he would like nothing better than to commission him for some pictures.

Rubens had good grounds for satisfaction with the result of his mission, and did not fail to congratulate himself upon it in a letter to his patron. But in another letter written the same day, the 17<sup>th</sup> July, to Chieppio, he does not conceal the disappointment he experienced through the conduct of Iberti, who had not presented him to the king on the day the coach was delivered, and that in spite of the recommendation of the duke his master.

Having attained the principal object of his mission, he was able to occupy himself with another part of his task. The duke of Mantua had instructed him to paint a certain number of portraits, probably those of the most beautiful and famous women of the court of Spain. What portraits he painted, and what became of them we do not know. A more important work was the portrait of the duke of Lerma, ordered by himself (*Œuvre*. N<sup>o</sup> 976). Towards the middle of September, 1603, Rubens expected to receive the order. He started on the work at the beginning of October, and on the 19<sup>th</sup> the portrait was sufficiently advanced for Iberti to be able to write to his master, that so much of it as was done was exciting general admiration. Rubens then went to Ventosilla, a country house of the duke of Lerma, situated fifteen leagues from Valladolid, where the king was then visiting his favourite, and whence he departed, on the 22<sup>nd</sup> or 23<sup>rd</sup> October, for the Escorial. At Ventosilla Rubens continued the work he had begun at Valladolid. On the 23<sup>rd</sup> November, Iberti was able to write to the duke that the



A YOUNG WOMAN  
Drawing (Study for one of the Saints in the Miracle of St. Ildefonso,  
Uffizi, Florence)

The Spanish minister had asked Ibañeta the evening before if Rubens could not paint him a portrait of the duke of Medina from memory. Ibañeta had shortly before received from some of his sovereigns, painted by Pambur. He added it to the other pictures without saying whence it came. The canvas was received with great satisfaction by Lerma, as were the crystal chases brought by Rubens.

That same morning, all around glided all those beautiful women of the king, and the next day, in the company of her ladies of honour, even the duchess herself, came to the great park. All were crowded with them. Calderon informed Ibañeta that the king was anxious to see



© Peter Paul Rubens  
Drawing (Collection, V. 2000)

the state of his pictures before he determined how much of he must be an indispensable part of the Lerma collection. The name of Lerma had, according to the queen, not received repeated satisfaction, passed without good effect. Lerma, who had lost his wife a few days before, did not prepare, in his sadness and discouragement, to renounce the pleasures and vanities of the world, had the profane pictures taken from his rooms and replaced by the serious compositions of which he had lately become the fortunate possessor. He showed himself very well inclined towards Rubens, and acquainted if he would not like to enter the service of the king, and some officers called him out for the appointment of his painting, the name of Lerma excited his hatred. Lerma gave him no encouragement and he would bid nothing better than to compensate him for some pictures.

Rubens had good grounds for satisfaction with the result of his mission, and did not fail to congratulate

himself upon it in a letter to his patron. But in another letter written the same day and directed to Oleppas, he does not conceal the disappointment he experienced through the conduct of Ibañeta, who had not presented him to the king, on the day to which he was appointed, contrary to spite of the recommendation of the duke his master.

Having attained the principal object of his mission, he was able to occupy himself with another part of his task. The duke of Medina had concerted him to paint a certain number of portraits, probably those of the most illustrious and famous women of the court of Spain. What portraits he painted, and what became of them we do not know. A more important work was the portrait of the duke of Lerma, ordered by himself (*Œuvre*, No. 976). Towards the middle of September, 1603, Rubens expected to receive the order. He started on the work at the beginning of October, and on the 11th the portrait was sufficiently advanced for Ibañeta to be able to write in his quality that so much of it as was done was exciting great admiration. Ibañeta then went to Versailles, a country house of the duke of Lerma, seated thirty leagues from Valladolid, where the duke was then sitting for his picture, and where he remained on the 22nd of Dec. Ibañeta had the portrait of the duchess painted by some of the best painters of the time, and the duke of Lerma, who was then sitting for his picture, was also painted by some of the best painters of the time.

#### A YOUNG WOMAN

Drawing (Study for one of the Saints in the Miracle of St. Ildefonso, Uffizi, Florence)







portrait was finished, that Lerma was extremely pleased with it and expressed himself very grateful to the duke of Mantua for the pleasure he had given him through his painter. The portrait represented the duke of Lerma on horseback and in complete armour. It became the property of the king through the confiscation of the duke's goods in 1618, and was restored to the family in 1635. All traces of it appear to be now lost; though Jean Rousseau claims that it belongs to the duke of Medina-cœli (1). Cruzada Villamil states that he had heard it said that it was at Denia in the castle of the marquis of that name, a descendant of the duke of Lerma (2). In 1621 the inventory of the pictures in the king's collection describes the picture as follows: « An equestrian portrait of the duke of Lerma, 4 varas high, in a black and gold deal frame, an original work by Rubens ».

Carl Justi attributes also to Rubens an equestrian portrait representing, it is said, the duke del Infantado, a son of Lerma, which is now in the palace of Dietrichstein, the property of the Countess Clam Galas. A portrait of a woman, coming from the dukes del Infantada, and exhibited at Madrid in 1892, also dates probably from 1603.

Rubens painted a number of other pictures for the duke of Lerma. In the list of pictures he offered for sale to Sir Dudley Carleton on the 28<sup>th</sup> April, 1618, we find: « Christ and the Twelve Apostles », painted by my pupils « after my own original compositions belonging to the duke of Lerma ». The « Twelve Apostles » are still in the Madrid Museum (*Œuvre*, Nos 56-80); the « Christ » is missing. These pictures fell into the king's hands through the confiscation of the goods of his favourite. The drawing of these figures, which have expressive and powerful features, a determined air, and muscular limbs, clearly proves that Rubens had already found the type of manly beauty which he was to reproduce all his life in his pictures. Their ample draperies betray his studies after the togaed Romans, and his preference for the ample and picturesque costume in which he envelops men of all times and lands. From the point of view of execution, these works have nothing characteristic; they differ in value and workmanship, but, like the « Democritus », « Heraclitus » and « Archimedes », they are very inferior to those he painted during the last years of his residence in Italy.

Rubens brought the drawings of the « Christ and the Apostles » back to Antwerp. He had these subjects painted at various times by his pupils, and retouched their work, as he did for the series offered to Dudley Carleton in 1618 but not bought by him; for a second example sold in 1615 to Balthasar Moretus by Theodoor Galle, and probably for a third, which was not engraved till the first half of the xvii century by Isselburg of Cologne. As early as the



ST SIMON THE APOSTLE  
Drawing (Albertina, Vienna).

(1) *L'Art*, 3 March, 1878.

(2) *Rubens Diplomático Español*, p. 336.



xviii century one of these series was at Rome in the Palazzo Rospigliosi, formerly the villa Aldobrandini, where it still remains. It is the most remarkable of all the examples ; some of the heads are venerable, others powerful and full of energy ; the draperies sweep boldly but without exaggeration, and the flesh is warm in colour. It is quite possible that Vandyck had a hand in this copy, but we have no proof of it.

Another of the series was in the hands of Sedelmeyer, the picture dealer, in Paris in 1888. A single canvas is in the Nostitz Gallery at Prague. Recently Dr Th. von Frimmel has published the news that the head of Christ which is missing at Madrid is preserved in the Schottenstift at Vienna (1).

The drawings are now in the Albertina at Vienna. They were engraved before 1620 by Nicolas Ryckemans, under the direction of Rubens.

During his visit to Spain, Rubens also painted the two pictures of « St John » in the Academy of San Fernando at Madrid, and the « St Augustine between Christ and Mary » in the same collection (*Œuvre*. Nos 462 and 393). The latter was painted for the College of Jesuits at Alcala de Henarés, and represents the typically Spanish legend of Our Lady directing the milk of her breast towards the favoured saint, who, strangely enough, does not appear to be anxious to quench his thirst from this divine spring.

Before Rubens left Mantua, duke Vincenzo had charged him with yet another task ; instead of returning directly from Spain to Italy, he was to pass through France, in order to paint there for the duke's collection the portraits of the most beautiful ladies of the court. When the moment came for his departure, Chieppio recalled to him this wish of their master's. Rubens raised objections of all kinds. « In France », he wrote, « they are quite as eager as in » Italy to engage artists of merit, and they have sent to find them, not only in Flanders and » at Florence, but even in Savoy and Spain ». If he went to Paris to paint portraits, he must expect attempts to keep him there, and he wished to remain in the service of the duke. Moreover, the scanty travelling allowance allotted him would not permit of his figuring at the court of France. It would be much better to entrust the task to a French portrait-painter. He promised to obey the duke's orders ; but the work appeared to him of too slight importance, and he preferred to be employed by his master, at Mantua or elsewhere, on tasks more suited to his talent, and on the completion of those which his Highness had had begun.

RUBENS'S RETURN TO MANTUA. — This letter, which was meant for the duke's eye and in which Rubens gives loud and clear expression to a noble pride and consciousness of his own merit, is not dated, but was probably sent in November, 1603. It had the desired effect. Rubens took ship direct for Italy, and must have reached Mantua at the beginning of the year 1604.

In a note of the 2<sup>nd</sup> June following, we find for the first time an indication of the salary he received from the duke. He had 400 ducats a year, payable quarterly in advance. Before that date, no doubt, he had been in receipt of a regular salary ; but it was probably increased after his return from Spain in recognition of the remarkable way in which he had fulfilled his mission.

(1) *Neue Freie Presse*, 11 October, 1900.

Rubens stayed in Mantua till the end of 1605. In November of that year he went to Rome for the second time. On the 6<sup>th</sup> January following, Balthasar Moretus sent him from Antwerp a letter for his brother Philip. Philip had then returned to the pontifical city. He had informed his friend, the Antwerp printer, of his arrival, and as this news reached Antwerp before the 6<sup>th</sup> January, it must have been dispatched from Rome in November, 1605. In that month Philip must have passed through Mantua, and thence taken his brother with him to the eternal city.

We only know for certain a small number of works executed by Rubens during his second sojourn in Mantua. We know no more than that the duke of Mantua, on the 30<sup>th</sup> September, 1605, sent the Emperor Rudolph II two copies made by his painter after Correggio. The ducal gallery then contained three pictures by the Italian master : « Venus and Mercury teaching Cupid to read », an « Ecce Homo », both of which are now in London in the National Gallery, and a « St Jerome meditating over a skull ». Two of these pictures were copied by Rubens.

During the same period Rubens painted a far more important work, three pictures given by the duke of Mantua to the Jesuits of his capital, in memory of his mother, who died in 1604 and was buried in this church. The church was dedicated to the Holy Trinity, and Vincenzo chose the Trinity adored by himself and his family as the subject of the picture destined to adorn the high altar. The second picture, placed on the Gospel side of the choir, represented the « Baptism of Christ »; the third, which represented the « Transfiguration », was placed on the Epistle side. The altar-piece was about 16 ft. 6 in. high by 10 ft. wide. The « Baptism of Christ » is 16 ft. high by 21 ft. 2 in. wide ; and the « Transfiguration » measures 13 ft. 6 in. high by 22 ft. wide.

The fate of these pictures was deplorable. At the time of the invasion by the soldiers of the French Republic, the Jesuits' church was used as a store for hay, and the pictures were taken away. A French commissioner took possession of the altar-piece, and had it cut into pieces to make it easier of transport. The theft was discovered, and the canvas remained at Mantua. The painter Pelizza was commissioned to join the fragments together again, but one part was missing, and he could only restore the top, representing the « Holy Trinity », and the bottom, which showed « Duke Vincenzo, his wife, and his father and mother, on their knees in prayer ». The remainder, with the sons and daughters, a body-guard, to whom Rubens had given his own features, and the duke's great greyhound, was never recovered. The two fragments are now in the Municipal Gallery of Mantua (*Œuvre*. N<sup>o</sup> 81.)

The two other pictures were also removed from the church in 1797. The « Baptism of Christ » appeared at the Schamp d'Aveschoot sale at Ghent in 1840, where it was bought by M. Georges, an expert of the French Museums. He had it mounted on new canvas and sold it to the baron de Laage of Lille. In 1869 the latter offered it for sale to the Brussels Museum, but without success. Soon afterwards it was acquired by the Antwerp amateur Joseph De Bom, who left it to the Museum of his native town, where it has been since 1876 (*Œuvre*. N<sup>o</sup> 237). In 1801 the « Transfiguration » became, in some way, the property of the Museum of the town of Nancy, where it still is (*Œuvre*. N<sup>o</sup> 259).

« The Holy Trinity adored by the Gonzagas » has lost considerable portions, but what remains of it is in fairly good preservation. Vincenzo and his father are kneeling on the left, his

mother and Eleonora on the right. Behind the group rise four twisted columns and a balustrade above which may be seen a little verdure. The sky is of a warm tint in its lower part ; above, it is covered with clouds. The duke and his wife are kneeling before prie-Dieu covered with



THE TRINITY (Museum, Mantua).

red drapery. He is bareheaded, and wears a brass breastplate and armlets and an ample robe of ermine, the border embroidered in gold; round his neck is the order of the Golden Fleece. His father, kneeling by his side, is robed in a heavy cloak of fur; one hand lies on his breast,



PORTRAITS OF THE FAMILY OF VINCENZO DE GONZAGA (Museum, Mantua).

the other holds a small book of prayers. The duchess is entirely enveloped in a cloak of white silk trimmed with ermine and laced with gold. Of the rest of her costume only part of her sleeves and a bodice of pale grey silk can be seen. She wears a high ruff with wide pleats, her hair is dressed high and ornamented with a twist of pearls, her joined hands rest on the prie-Dieu. Vincenzo's mother, Eleonora of Austria, wears a black robe with white lace on the breast. A cap made of a single piece hides her forehead. Vincenzo closely resembles Rubens,



but his hair is even scantier on the top of his head than the painter's. He wears a full beard, which is chestnut-coloured like his hair, and thin on the cheeks. Eleonora is an imposing figure, with the same family features as her sister Marie de Medici, a sharp nose, thin lips and a slightly prominent chin.

The painting is very clear, the white garments, the white colonnade, the reflection that lights up the red drapery of the prie-Dieu, and the warm glow that fills the lower parts of the sky all contributing to give the whole composition a luminous appearance. The brushwork is



THE BAPTISM OF CHRIST — Drawing (Louvre, Paris).

very broad, even a little hasty. These are the earliest portraits by Rubens that we know; but already they are thoroughly Rubenian and reveal the master's hand. They have a proud flow and a lofty air. A devout contemplation may be read in the faces of the princely donors; their bearing, at once majestic and elegant, imposes respect, their whole personality breathes nobility. They represented so well the best and most original manner of the master, that twenty-five years later, when he had to paint another princely family in the same devout attitude, he was able to take these first official portraits as his only models. The *Albert and Isabella* on the shutters of the *St Ildefonso* very closely recall Vincenzo de Gonzaga and the duchess Eleonora. No Italian, no Fleming, had ever done this before. He had created the men and women of Rubens, transformed into conformity with his conception of the human type, an ideal made up of strength and grandeur.

The *Holy Trinity* is of inferior quality, and has been much damaged. Rubens has not represented the three Divine Persons directly; he has pictured them on a curtain borne by five well-formed angels hovering in the air. Behind at the top are columns supporting a semi-circular architrave. In the lower part of the picture stand the bases of these columns, which

consequently form a kind of enclosure, containing the ducal family on their knees in prayer.

In the « Baptism of Christ » the composition is divided into two parts, On the left, Christ, completely nude and holding in both hands the linen thrown across his thighs, is standing in the water which reaches to his ankles. Above his head hovers the Holy Spirit, lit with a sheaf of celestial rays. St John the Baptist, clothed in a sheepskin, is standing on the bank of Jordan; with eyes raised to heaven he pronounces the sacramental words, pouring from his outstretched hands the water of Baptism on the Saviour's head. Two large angels and another smaller one hover behind Christ; one of the former holds the neophyte's cincture, the two others his red robe. To the left, on the bank of the stream, are seven men undressing and preparing to receive Baptism. Two of them are sitting, one completely undressed, the other freeing his foot with an effort from the hose he has not yet taken off. The five others are standing; one is a young man completely nude, who is awaiting the moment to draw near the Baptist; two others are taking off their robes by pulling them over their heads. In the background are two women half disrobed. None of Rubens's works betrays a more faithful imitation of the Italians than this. In its total effect it recalls the 50<sup>th</sup> Loggia of Raphael, which represents the same subject. The principal group, which occupies the centre of it, is composed in the same way; on the left four angels, on the right three men undressing and one woman. Rubens, it is true, changes the attitude of the figures, but he groups them in the same way. He follows yet another master, and in the men who are undressing with powerful movements we recognise the soldiers who are dressing again after crossing a river in Michael Angelo's cartoon for the Pisan war.

This picture transports us into the land of the giants, in which Rubens had just set foot, and which he was never to leave. He has taken the most characteristic features of the two princes of the Italian school; from Raphael his rather feminine grace, and from Michael Angelo his powerful forms and his heroic movements; but the dreamy face of his St John, his sculptural Christ, the young man who stands waiting and the other who is sitting down, and the figures that bend, lean back, or stretch, are all descendants of Hercules, and the first born of that mighty family of which Rubens was the father.

In « The Transfiguration » we see Christ in a glory on the mountain with Moses on his right and Elias on his left; the apostles, Peter, James and John are on their knees before him in wonder and adoration. The other nine are standing at the foot of the mountain, four of them looking at the scene of the possessed which is taking place on the right. A boy is in the agony of the convulsions of some mysterious malady; his father and mother are supporting him in anguish and despair, while the interest of the bystanders is fixed on the dreadful spectacle. The scene is conceived as Raphael would have conceived it; on high, the glorification of the God-man; below, suffering caused by the spirit of evil. The action, which is double, is only imperfectly connected, and the spectator is astounded by two supernatural events at once. Among the figures in the lower part, there are some long-haired and bearded faces which forcibly recall certain powerful heads with strongly marked features in Raphael's « Acts of the Apostles. » The radiance of Christ lights the centre of the picture; the sides disappear in thick shadows, treated in the sombre manner recently raised to honour by Caravaggio.

« The Baptism of Christ » and « The Transfiguration » have both been so damaged that

it is impossible to recognise the original colours. Nevertheless the remains of those three works are enough to enable us to determine the direction Rubens was then following. He aimed definitely at the great scale, and saw nature, men, and their actions through the magnifying glass of his admiration for all that implied strength, brilliance, exuberance of life and wealth of form. He borders on the rhetorical, both through his imitation of the masterly creations of his predecessors, and through the amplification of the motives he borrowed from them. But he was an imitator endowed with rare originality, and transformed all that he borrowed. The fine, firmly-muscled limbs so dear to the Italians are with him plentifully clothed with flesh, as he had seen and admired them in the north, and his imagination enjoyed giving still more amplitude and fulness to their shape. He was no empty declaimer; he liked to raise his voice and loved sonorous words, but his high-sounding eloquence was not without good sense and art. The duke and duchess of Mantua in his retable are magnificent figures, that would more appropriately symbolise imperial grandeur than represent the state of a modest house of princes; but their external pomp and personal dignity are of genuine quality, and no sovereign, however powerful, could fail to be flattered at seeing himself painted with so proud an exterior. The figures in the two lateral paintings, the small and sickly inhabitants of the banks of Jordan, are here made on the epic model of the heroes of antiquity; but taken in themselves, they are admirably built men, whose movements have the precision and grace that befits their ennobled nature.

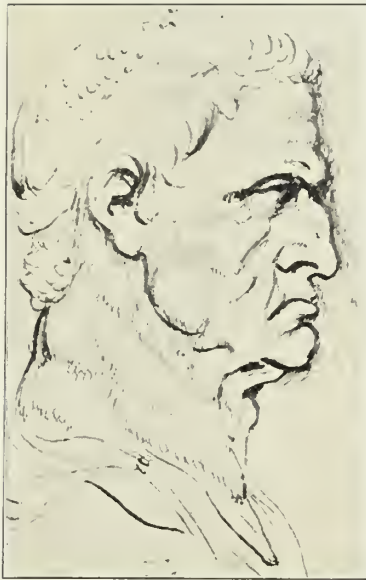
RUBENS'S SECOND VISIT TO ROME. — Rubens reached Rome at the end of 1605. During the first months of his stay in the city he was attacked by pleurisy, which was cured by one of his admirers, the German doctor, Johann Faber, who was then teaching medicine in Rome. The illness left him in July. He was then living with his brother Philip in the Strada della Croce near the Piazza di Spagna (1). Philip Rubens had been appointed librarian to Cardinal Ascanio Colonna, and held this post till the last months of 1606, when his mother's uncertain health called him home.

Through his daily intercourse with his brother, Peter Paul became an enthusiastic admirer and a sound connoisseur of antiquity. How pleasant and fruitful the two brothers must have found the ten or eleven months they spent together in Rome, one explaining the monuments they visited from his learning, and the other animating them by his feeling for art! We have a work by Rubens that may be regarded as the fruit of their common studies; the drawings that he made to illustrate Philip Rubens's book *Electorum libri II*, which was published by the Plantin press in 1608, while Rubens was still in Italy. The author dealt with all sorts of questions relative to the customs of ancient Rome. Thus in chapter xvii of Book I, he examines how the Roman toga was draped; to illustrate his explanations, he gives in his book an engraving of the statue of Titus, now in the Vatican Museum, as seen from in front, and from the right and the left side. In his chapter xxx, he describes how the praetor who presided over the games gave the chariot-drivers the signal to start by throwing a piece of cloth into the

(1) BERTOLOTTI : *Artisti Belgi ed Olandesi a Roma nei secoli XVI e XVII*, p. 85.



arena; this dissertation is accompanied by an engraving of an antique bas-relief, found near the Nomentane Gate, which shows the praetor standing up with his arm raised ready to throw the *Mappa*. In chapter xx of Book II, in speaking of the double tunic worn by the Roman women, Philip explains that the under tunic, which was fastened on the shoulder, was not open down the side and did not allow the legs to be seen. He gives as examples reproductions of a seated statue of «Rome», in the garden of Cardinal Cesi, and the erect statue of «Flora», which was then in the Farnese palace and is now in the Naples Museum. In chapter xxv he deals with the head-dress of the priests and interpolates in the text a sort of peaked helmet



HEAD OF A ROMAN EMPEROR  
Drawing (Duke of Devonshire).

and a head with the same kind of covering, after two marbles, one of which was in the Capitol, and the other in the Fabian vault (*in fornice Fabiano*). A second engraving in the same chapter reproduces a bas-relief discovered on the slope of the Capitoline and originally in the temple of Concord, in which we see a hat of a different kind worn by the priests of Jupiter, and various instruments and insignia belonging to the sacrificing priests. In chapter xxxvi, which treats of children and their nourishment, there is a representation of a medal of the Empress Faustina, bearing the monogram of Adam van Noort. The rest of the plates are engraved after drawings by Peter Paul Rubens. The author expressly states that his brother had assisted him in his work by the help of his artistic hand and his clear and solid intelligence. Both the brothers discussed the subjects treated by Philip, and scoured Rome together in search of antiquities and works of art that might serve as examples and proofs of the writer's statements.

Rubens, therefore, made a thorough study of the ancients. He never produced servile imitations of their works, and, even during his residence in Italy, never made mechanical copies of them. Were it not for the evidence of Philip and the models which are still in existence, we should take the plates of the *Electa* for Rubens's original creations, so clearly are they stamped with his imprint. He rejuvenates these antiquities, and gives them life and colour. Thus the bas-relief representing the accessories used by the sacrificing priests bears a close resemblance to the details of the same kind found in his pictures; they show the same treatment of the chariot-drivers, who are full of life and movement, and especially of the figures of women. Throughout, the hard outlines are softened, the sculptures are transformed into paintings, especially in the «Flora», and the marble has become flesh.

He not only studied the master-pieces of antique sculpture, but he began to collect them, and Balthasar Moretus states that he brought back a considerable number to Antwerp. He considered the works of the Greeks and Romans as the most perfect creations of art, and declared himself that he doted on the ancients.

From that time he began to show the interest in the manners and customs of antiquity which characterised him as long as he lived, and induced him to collect marbles, medals,

engraved stones and coins, to plan the publication of series of plates engraved after his drawings and representing archæological subjects, to keep up a correspondence on controverted questions with his friend Peiresc, and to take, in a word, an active part in the work of exploration that was carried on in that and the preceding century by a large body of scholars with the object of discovering and explaining the creations of ancient Rome. He noted with great care the works of art that he met with in the collections of great amateurs. We find proof of this in a manuscript by his friend Peiresc, in the National Library in Paris, in which the list of a series of sculptures, engraved stones and gold ornaments is preceded by the following note: Extract from the Itinerary of M. Rubens, drawn up at Rome in the house of Signor

• Lelio Pasqualino • (1). Sculptures were not the only things that won his admiration; he venerated equally all the manifestations of ancient genius. In the last years of his life, when he received Franciscus Junius's book *De Pictura Veterum*, he declared to the author that he imitated the painters of antiquity with the greatest respect, and worshipped their footsteps without flattering himself with the hope of ever being able to equal them (2).

What Rubens was doing at Rome was being done at Antwerp, at Louvain, and all over the Low Countries in the universities and in private studies, where hundreds of scholars were at work upon the language, the history and the institutions of the conquerors of the world. With most it was no more than the pastime of men of letters and book-worms; with Rubens it contributed to the formation of his artistic genius, and provided him with the elements of his compositions and creations. In his epistolary communications with the learned, with his master Otho Vænius, his brother Philip, Woverius, Rockox or Gevartius, he penetrated the spirit of Latin authors like Seneca, Tacitus, Juvenal, and the Stoics, those proud spirits without pity for human frailties. From their writings he learned always to preserve a balance and serenity of mind, to regard life as a work of art that brings honour to him who acquits himself well and shame to him who bungles. His own nature was that of a ruler, and his career was to be triumphal; his favourite heroes were the republicans, stout hearted and bold in action, the consuls and emperors who shared in the conquest of the world, returning home only to celebrate their victories and govern the vanquished nations with wisdom. He came to form at once so lofty and so just an idea of these accomplished men that Willem Bode was justified in saying that the form given by Rubens to his Romans has remained final through the centuries.



It is not known exactly what works Rubens carried out in Rome for the duke of Mantua. No doubt he had to paint portraits and copies in return for the salary allowed him; but it was paid so irregularly and so tardily that on several occasions he was compelled to insist on









HEAD OF A ROMAN EMPEROR  
Drawing (Duke of Devonshire).

(1) National Library, Paris. Peiresc MS. 9530, fol. 199.

(2) Letter of the 1<sup>st</sup> August, 1637.

receiving his money, and more than once Annibale Chieppio, the duke's faithful counsellor, had to make him advances out of his own pocket. Duke Vincenzo also consulted Rubens on the works of art he wished to buy, and sometimes commissioned him to negotiate the purchase. Thus we know that it was through Rubens's agency that the ducal gallery acquired, at the beginning of 1607, the  *Death of the Virgin lamented by the Apostles* , painted by Michael Angelo da Caravaggio for an altar in Santa Maria della Scala in Rome, and now in the Louvre. The artist has represented the Virgin with naked feet and a swollen stomach; the apostles are working-men, weeping and lamenting in the fashion of the common people. Those who had ordered the picture found it too trivial and offensive to be placed in their church. The fact that Rubens advised the duke to acquire it proves that he was not afraid of Caravaggio's realistic tendencies, and that neither this audacious painting of a corpse nor the ingenuous expression of grief, nor yet the sombre tone of the picture appeared to him good reasons for denying the artistic value of the work. His own realism never found such crude expression, and he was never completely converted to the black manner; but he was not the man to disapprove of others' vision simply because he did not share it.

RUBENS AT GENOA. — His second stay in Rome was interrupted by a journey he made to Genoa, in June, 1607, in the train of the duke of Mantua. On the 11<sup>th</sup> of that month, Cardinal Borghese writes to Vincenzo that his painter is returning to Mantua and leaving unfinished a picture he had begun for the Chiesa Nuova in Rome, and begs him to allow Rubens to return as soon as he has no further need for his services. The duke had intended at first to spend part of the summer at Spa, to recruit his health, and to take his painter into Flanders, as the Italians used to call our country. But at the last moment he changed his mind, and on the 22<sup>nd</sup> June he set out for Genoa, which he reached on the 4<sup>th</sup> or 5<sup>th</sup> July, and settled in the Palazzo Grimaldi. There he remained till the 24<sup>th</sup> August.

We have no absolute proof that Rubens was at Genoa with the duke all that time; but there is no doubt that he followed him there, and left with him. His recall from Rome to accompany the duke on his journey, his arrival at Mantua at the moment when Vincenzo was on the point of starting, and Bellori's statement that he went from Rome to Genoa where he stayed longer than anywhere else, amount to sufficient reason for presuming that Rubens was with the duke at Genoa during the latter's stay of seven weeks. We find another proof of this in a letter from Paolo Agostino Spinola, who asks Chieppio on the 26<sup>th</sup> September, 1607, whether Rubens can at length finish his portrait. The painter had probably met the Genoese noble in that city some time before, and had formed relations with him, which, as with others of the same kind, were to be very useful to him in his career. If we may believe Bellori, this was not the only picture he painted at Genoa: the Italian historian states, in fact, that he painted an  *Adonis lying dead in the arms of Venus* ,  *Hercules*  and an  *Iole*  for Giovanni Vincenzo Imperiale. In 1626 Antony Vandyck painted the portrait of the Genoese noble for whom these pictures were painted, and his canvas is now in Royal Museum in Brussels. Rubens himself states in a letter to Pierre Dupuy that he went to Genoa on several occasions and formed relations with many of the important men of the republic (1).

(1) *Correspondance de Rubens*. Letter of 19th May, 1628.



A much later fact proves conclusively that Rubens made a stay of some length in Genoa, in 1607, or in some other year. In 1622 he published a book, *Palazzi di Genova* (*Œuvre*. N° 1230) which contains the plans and façades of twelve palaces of Genoa, engraved by Nicolas Ryckemans in 72 plates. Soon afterwards he published the second part of the work which gives the plans and façades of nineteen palaces and four churches in the same town, in 67 plates. The book was republished in 1652, and again in 1663, by Jacobus van Meurs, in 1708 by Hendrik and Cornelis Verdussen, and in 1775 by Arkstee and Merkus at Amsterdam and Leipzig. In a short preface accompanying the plates, Rubens says that he collected the plans of these buildings during his travels in Italy. He adds further on : « In this little work I give the plans, elevations, and façades and two sections of certain palaces which I collected at Genoa, not without trouble and expense, although I had the good fortune to be able to avail myself to some extent of the work of another ». The way he speaks of the palaces he has had engraved is sufficient proof that he had visited them and knew them well.

The fact is important as confirming the artist's stay in Genoa in July and August, 1607 ; but still more so as explaining Rubens's predilection for a certain style of architecture. « We see in our own country », he says again in the preface to his book, « the architecture which is known as barbarous or gothic, slowly perishing and disappearing ; we see some enlightened spirits introducing into our country, for its embellishment and glory, a greater symmetry, which follows the rules established by the Greeks and Romans. Of this we find examples in the superb churches built by the reverend Society of Jesus, in the towns of Antwerp and Brussels ».

For Rubens, therefore, the church of the Jesuits in Antwerp, the finest of those built by that Order in our country, or even elsewhere, reached the height of perfection and classic regularity. This style, which we all recognise now-a-days as a symptom of decadence, and the first hint of bad taste, was in Rubens's eyes a return to the laws of true art. We remain astonished. Rubens partly came under the influence of his time and partly imposed upon his time his own conception of beauty. To him, as to the men of his century and the century before, Gothic architecture was barbarous ; he understood the beauty of the medieval churches as little as that of the painters of the middle-ages. Vasari expressed the same opinion when, in one of the first chapters of his *Lives of the Painters, Sculptors and Architects* , he said of Gothic art : « There is a style called the Germanic, which differs widely from that of the ancients and moderns. To-day no artist of talent can bear to hear it mentioned, all flee from it as monstrous and barbarous, devoid of symmetry, and worthy to be called the style of confusion and disorder ».

We know the palaces Rubens admired at Genoa ; they still stand in the Via Nuova (now called Via Garibaldi) and in the Via Balbi. The plans were made for the most part by Galeazzo Alessi between 1550 and 1572. With those that were added in the first half of the seventeenth century they form a range of sumptuous buildings, which have justly won for Genoa the title of « the city of palaces ». At the moment when Rubens saw them, they were the latest creations of the art of architecture, and the best products of the last period of the Renaissance. There is nothing surprising in the fact that our artist was vividly impressed by them, and that on his return to our country, in which no palaces or princely houses had been built for half a

century, he was tempted to introduce the new art, not only because it was new and had given birth to remarkable works, but also because it was in harmony with his own artistic tendencies. In the preface to his work Rubens says that he believes he is rendering a service to all the countries on this side of the Alps in giving these plans of palaces and private houses. The princely palaces admired in Italy and France, he says, are too large and sumptuous for ordinary gentlemen to think of imitating them ; but those of Genoa, beautiful and rich though they are, are of a more moderate description, and may serve as models for many.

Genoa extends over a long and narrow strip of ground edging the gulf between the



THE CUMEAN SIBYL  
Drawing after Michael Angelo (Louvre, Paris)

harbour and the mountains. Thence arose the necessity of erecting the buildings on land of spare measure, and of devoting attention chiefly to the decoration of the interiors, like the well of the staircase and the staircase itself, instead of opening out courtyards within, like those which form the principal ornaments of the Roman palaces of the preceding period. The façades have not the ample space for decoration which characterizes the dwellings of the nobility in Rome, Sienna and Florence ; but on a limited surface, the decoration is more exuberantly rich. As a rule the windows are surrounded with mouldings and crowned with pediments ; the dormer-windows are framed in cartouches. Pilasters rise between the windows, while the flat surfaces are generally covered with sculpture and architectural ornament. The rustic basements are of free-stone ; and a heavy roofing crowns the edifice. The total

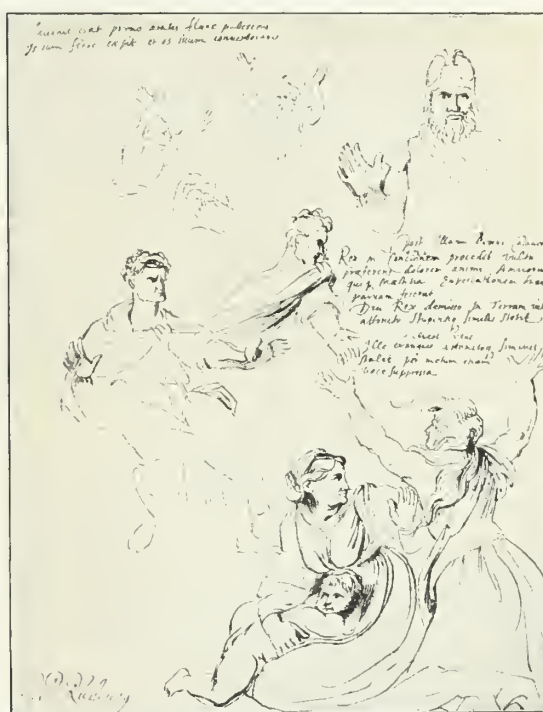
effect is one of solidity, and appears heavy and overcharged in comparison with the buildings of the first Renaissance. These signs of power, wealth and pride pleased Rubens, who valued them more than the sobriety and the refinement of the earlier style. These, therefore, were the principles he preached, and which he helped to spread through his native land by his book on the Genoese palaces and by his example. He built his own house after this taste ; the buildings which appear in his pictures and his triumphal arches of 1635 were conceived in the same style, which with us is often called by his name.

RUBENS'S LAST MONTHS IN ROME. — At the end of August, 1607, Rubens returned to Rome. He had scarcely arrived when duke Vincenzo received from Brussels a letter from the Archduke Albert, begging him to allow his painter a holiday to come to Antwerp, where there were some family affairs to be settled. The Archduke certainly did not say that Rubens would never go back, but the duke of Mantua feigned to understand it so, and replied very politely

that his painter preferred to remain in Italy, and that in consequence he could not grant the request. In the month of July, when the duke had recalled the artist to Mantua to accompany him in his journey into Flanders, Rubens had hoped to profit by the occasion to revisit Antwerp, which he had left seven years before. The journey not having taken place, and Peter-Paul having learnt from his brother that their mother's health left more and more to be desired, it was probably not without regret that he was obliged to renounce the hope of seeing the dear invalid; probably also he wrote as much to his brother, who no doubt would have asked for the Archduke's intervention to obtain the necessary leave.

He stayed in Rome, therefore, and was only to leave the pontifical city to return home finally. For the present he continued the important work he had begun before his departure for Genoa, and which had been ordered of him at the end of the preceding year. On the 2<sup>nd</sup> December, 1606, he had received a letter from Vincenzo de Gonzaga recalling him to Mantua. That same day he wrote to Annibale Chieppio: The resolution of his Highness in recalling me to Mantua puts me in a very awkward position. The time fixed is so short that it will be impossible for me to leave Rome so promptly on account of several important tasks which I have been obliged to undertake, after devoting all the summer to my studies, and that, I must frankly confess, because I found myself so short of money, being unable to live in Rome and keep up a house and two servants with no other resources than 140 crowns, the only money I have received from Mantua through the whole of my absence. My dignity, therefore, bids me make some profit from my art, since the best occasion that could possibly be found at Rome has presented itself.

» It is a case of the high altar of the new church of the priests of the Oratory called Santa Maria in Vallicella, which is to-day the most renowned and popular in the town, for it stands in the centre of Rome and the most distinguished artists have contributed to the decoration of it. Although the work has not been begun yet, persons of such lofty rank are interested in it that I cannot, without compromising my reputation, decline an order I have obtained in such an honourable manner, in concurrence with the leading artists of this city, for I should be guilty of a serious desertion of my patrons, who would be extremely put out at it. In fact, had I shown any hesitation on account of my duty towards the duke of Mantua, they would have offered to approach him, and have pointed out to his Highness that he ought to consider himself fortunate in the honour which one of his servants was doing him at



A PAGE OF STUDIES  
(Museum, Berlin).



Rome. Cardinal Borghese, no doubt, would speak for me, but I believe that at present I cannot do better than address myself to you. There is no need of any one else, and no one can persuade the duke better than yourself how important this matter is to my reputation, as well as to my material interests ».

On the 13<sup>th</sup> December, 1606, the duke authorized him to remain three months longer in Rome. Six months passed before Rubens left the town. The work was still unfinished, and on the 9<sup>th</sup> June, 1607, when he was on the point of setting out for Mantua, he asked for power to return to Rome to put the finishing touches to it after his excursion with the duke. Two days later, Cardinal Borghese wrote to Vincenzo de Gonzaga to make the same request. When Rubens returned to the eternal city, towards the end of August, he finished his work, which was erected over the high altar.

The church of Santa Maria in Vallicella, dedicated to the Virgin, possessed a miraculous image of Our Lady which was placed above Rubens's picture. The church was a new one built for Philip of Neri, founder of the Order of the Oratory, after the plans of Giovanni Mattheo da Città di Castello, on the site where there had formerly been a chapel dedicated to Pope St Gregory. The church, therefore, bore the double name of Santa Maria e San Gregorio in Vallicella; it has kept to the present day the name of the new church (Chiesa Nuova) under which it was known in the time of Rubens. It belonged to the Oratorians. The convent of which it formed part was the scene, about this date, of the performances of the first musical compositions called Oratorios, after the name of the Order. The first stone was laid in 1575; by 1599 the church was complete, with the exception of the façade, built after the designs of Martino Lunghi. Cardinal Agostino de Cusa, titular of the church, obtained leave from Pope Sixtus V to place in the new church the relics of St Flavia Domitilla, virgin, of the eunuchs Nereus and Achilleus which had just been discovered during the demolition of the altar of the Basilica of SS. Nereus, Achilleus, and Petronilla, and of the martyrs Maurus and Papias, which were in the same basilica.

Rubens's name must have been held in high esteem for our painter to have been preferred to the numbers of artists then in Rome, among whom were some of great reputation, like Guido Reni, the cavaliere d'Arpino, Annibale Caracci and Domenico Zampieri. It is certain that men of influence must have taken him under their protection, and among them Rubens himself mentions Cardinal Borghese, a nephew of Sixtus V and an ardent patron of the fine arts, whom his uncle had loaded with honours and riches. Thus he had been proclaimed Protector of Germany and the Low Countries (*Germanii et Belgiae protector*), which explains why the Flemish artists sought his intervention. We must mention also Cardinal Bartolomeo Cesi, whose librarian, Jan de Hemelaer, was a friend of the two Rubens brothers, and in whose garden stood the statue of Flora which Peter Paul drew for his brother's book. Two other members of the Cesi family, Cardinal Pierdonato and Angelo, bishop of Todi, had contributed, mainly by gifts of money, to the construction and decoration of the Chiesa Nuova.

Rubens chose for the subject of his picture the Pope St Gregory, surrounded by the Saints whose relics are honoured in the Chiesa Nuova (*Œuvre*. No 441). In the upper part of the canvas is the image of Our Lady surrounded with angels. St Gregory, draped in his cope, is standing on a step in the centre of the composition. His eyes are fixed on the Holy Spirit

hovering a little above his head; his right arm is half-raised in a gesture of ecstasy, his left holds a book that rests against his hip. Behind him opens a half-ruined arcade which supports the stone frame around the figure of Our Lady. On the right is St Domitilla, a young woman whose amber-coloured hair with golden lights is crowned with a diadem of pearls. She wears a purple drapery with a golden-yellow lining thrown over a robe of brilliant blue. On the left stands St Maur, bare-headed, in a steel cuirass that partially covers a panther's hide; his legs and arms are bare; his right hand rests on a long staff, and his left holds an arrow. Behind him is seen the upper part of the nude body and the young Rubenian head of St Papias. Behind St Domitilla appear the heads of St Nereus and St Achilleus, who, like St Maur, are raising their eyes to the image of the Virgin placed above the arcade. The image is borne by two small angels. To the top of the frame are attached heavy garlands of foliage, the hanging ends of which are supported by four small angels. Through the opening of the arcade appears the blue sky dotted with silver clouds, bright in the upper parts, and darker in the lower, and admirably throwing up the venerable head of the pope.

The picture is extremely decorative. The romantic ruins of the arcade covered with ivy, the plump little angels, the elegantly draped figure of St Gregory, whose cope falls in bold folds, the sumptuous and brilliantly coloured robes of St Domitilla, and the fine attitude of St Maur, all is theatrical in character, and seems made to give pleasure to the eye. The colouring cooperates to the same effect. The blue sky seen through the top of the arcade, St Domitilla's blue robe and the blue parts of the border of St Gregory's cope give the picture a dominant note of brilliance, which is further enhanced by the warm white complexions of the angels, the rich colour of the saint's cloak, and the nude flesh of the warrior and St Domitilla, and strengthened by the splashes of red formed by St Gregory's book, St Domitilla's bodice, the ribbon round the neck of St Maur and the draperies of the angels. The colours are not full, but broken by the clouds that hang in the air and the bright and dark lights that variegate the robes of the saints. The grayish tones of the arcade, the pilaster and the stair make a neutral background from which the brilliant colours are thrown out. The modelling and the effects of light are admirable throughout; but here and there, on St Domitilla's arms, for instance, and the angels' flesh, the glowing lights fall less warmly than in the master's later works. On the breast of St Papias mingle shadows of a warm brown and a blueish gray. The centre of the picture, the bust of St Gregory and the head of St Domitilla, are in full light; the shadows grow thicker towards the bottom, while still remaining transparent; the light grows weaker again towards the top, the colours of the Madonna are wan, and the frame that surrounds her is invaded by shadow.

Profound examination of this work proves it altogether improbable that Rubens retouched it later, as some have affirmed. It differs so widely from those he painted after his return from Italy that the supposition is entirely inadmissible. The shadows are heavier and more abundant, and the flesh firmer, and the romanticism of the composition contrasts with the realism which was to characterize the master's later works. The arrangement declares it to belong incontestably to Rubens's first period. The characters placed side by side with each other have no more connection between them than the different patrons under whose invocation the church was placed. Two of the saints on the left, Maur and Papias, hold their staves with an identical

movement, so that their hands touch; each figure is there independently, and gives the impression of posing a little.

The St Gregory is one of Rubens's most superb figures; he was to reproduce it later on one of the shutters of the *Elevation of the Cross*, but without surpassing it. The St Domitilla is perhaps the most brilliantly coloured of Rubens's women. His love of robust forms, which



HERCULES IN THE GARDEN OF THE HESPERIDES  
Sketch (Louvre, Paris).

we have already observed, is here confirmed: his St Gregory is a colossal pontiff, his St Maur a young Hercules, and the bare arm of St Domitilla is not that of a young maiden, but of a giantess. There is no imitation of the earlier Italians, except in the St Maur, which is taken from Correggio's St George, now in the Dresden Museum. The effects of light and shade are richer than in his previous works. The young master has escaped from the black manner which was beginning to triumph all around him, but the influence of the artists of the south has given more warmth to his tones. He avoids also the factitious element of the academic forms that were honoured in his time, and his manner even denotes a very marked reaction in the opposite direction. Only one of his figures reminds us that he was living in the land of classical art; the attitude of his St Domitilla has the tranquil air of an ancient priestess. But the principal figure, St Gregory, is a truly Rubenian creation: the amplitude of his proportions, the breadth of his movement, and his attitude of inspiration make him grand, imposing. Here, indeed, is what may be called the sublime in painting.

It was not the first time that Rubens had given his figures the expression of ecstasy that characterizes the St Gregory in such a high degree. His St Helen uplifted by the discovery of the true Cross, the duke and duchess of Mantua adoring the Holy Trinity, the St John in *The Baptism of Christ* with his eyes upturned to heaven as if he were calling it to witness the memorable event in which he was one of the actors, are all absorbed by thoughts that have nothing terrestrial in them, and have an ecstatic expression both of countenance and attitude. In a number of his later works there are characters, like the Christ in the *Elevation of the Cross*, the Simeon in the *Offering in the Temple*, the monks in the *Communion of St Francis*, the Virgin in the *Assumption*, and many others, whom he shows as detached from earth by profound emotions of fear or desire, of ardent faith, hope or love, of gratitude or suffering. These manifestations of the interior





ST. GREGORY AND OTHER SAINTS  
(Museum, Grenoble)

remains to be seen how handsomely, and how wisely, the artist has succeeded in carrying it off.

The St Gregory is one of Rubens's most famous pictures, and it is one of the most beautiful of the whole. It is a picture of a saint, and it is a picture of a saint in the most beautiful manner. The saint is shown in the most beautiful manner, and the picture is one of the most beautiful of the whole.



ST. GREGORY'S LAST MOMENTS  
BY PETER PAUL RUBENS

It was not the first time that Rubens had given the figure of a saint, and it was not the first time that he had shown the St Gregory in such a high degree. The St Gregory is one of the most beautiful of the whole. It is a picture of a saint, and it is a picture of a saint in the most beautiful manner. The saint is shown in the most beautiful manner, and the picture is one of the most beautiful of the whole.

#### ST. GREGORY AND OTHER SAINTS (Museum, Grenoble)







life in which he delights, show the relationship of the painter of human realities to his predecessors, the idealists who strove to express supernatural beauty.

The Chiesa Nuova picture was put in its place. Rubens was very pleased with it, and even declared that it was the greatest success of all his works. But his satisfaction was dashed by a disappointment. The picture was placed over the high altar between two windows which were so reflected in the canvas that it was impossible to make out the figures and colours. He was unwilling to leave it in this false light, and begged the fathers of the Oratory to let him take it away. They consented, on condition that he would paint them a copy on unpolished stone. Rubens accepted the condition, and then proposed to the duke of Mantua that he should buy the picture. The duke's galleries contained as yet no picture by his titular painter. Rubens told Annibale Chiappio that he would sell it for less than eight hundred crowns, the price which had been stipulated in the order. He declared in this connection that in his opinion the picture was the best he had painted. But Vincenzo had too many other expenses to meet and his treasury was too poorly supplied to allow him to think of making the purchase. Rubens then exhibited his picture in the Chiesa Nuova, where it was greatly admired. But his hope of obtaining a good price for it was defeated, and when he returned to Antwerp he was obliged to take it with him.



THE MIRACULOUS IMAGE OF THE VIRGIN IN THE CHIESA NUOVA AT ROME. — Drawing (Louvre, Paris).

At the beginning of February, 1608, it had been agreed between Rubens and the Oratorian fathers that the St Gregory should be replaced by a copy on stone. He set to work at once, and in October the copy was finished. This time it was not a single picture, but three, one of which was placed over the high altar and the other two on either side against the walls of the church, where they may still be seen (*Œuvre*. Nos 205, 442, 443).

The subject of the original picture is also divided into three parts. Over the altar stands the miraculous image of the Virgin in an oval frame, which is usually covered by the Madonna in Rubens's picture, and supported by thirteen small angels whose heads are partly painted over the edges of the gilded frame. Below, in the clouds that cover the background of the picture, hovers another band of celestial spirits. Right at the bottom is a third group of larger angels looking up at the Virgin. The picture placed on the left of the altar shows St Gregory in the same position as in the original picture. On his right is St Maur in a cuirass, with a palm in his right hand; on his left, St Papias. Three angels are holding crowns and palms above the heads of the martyrs. At St Gregory's feet a fourth angel holds the tiara. In the middle of the picture on the right of the altar is St Domitilla, with her eyes to heaven, holding a palm in her

right hand ; on either side of her are St Nereus and St Achilleus. Above are six angels holding crowns. The St Gregory is the only one of these figures that has been taken unaltered from the original work. All the rest are completely changed. On the whole, this second version is inferior to the first, for Rubens knew that with such bad lighting it would do him little honour, and did not take the same pains. Possibly also those who passed judgment on the original work may have included some partisans of the black manner who found Rubens not sufficiently in conformity with the taste of the day. In any case it is certain that the second version is painted in browner tones than the first, with very dark shadows on a background of obscurity and with no effect of bright light.

The characters no more form a single group than in the first composition. St Gregory and St Domitilla are still the striking figures that we saw before ; but they have less grandeur. The holy pontiff is not planned with the same breadth. His head has still its fine ecstatic expression, but it is smaller and disappears into the shadow. St Domitilla is a grand and noble figure dressed in a white robe embroidered in gold ; she spreads herself majestically in all the richness of her limbs and garments ; hers is the only figure that is not inferior to the corresponding figure in the first picture. It is noticeable that Rubens has given her the long, tapering fingers which in the future were to characterize all his women, and which have been wrongly considered to be an exclusive mark of Vandyck. He reproduced this figure in the St Catherine which he painted on the outside of the shutters of his *Elevation of the Cross*.

Payment for the work was made by several instalments. The retable was to be paid for on the valuation of experts. The valued it at 330 crowns. Rubens himself put the other two pictures at 200 crowns each and deducted 50 crowns from the total. Up to the 25<sup>th</sup> October, 1608, Cardinal Serra had paid 300 crowns out of the 680 he had to pay. On that date Rubens received 200, then 100 more on the 18<sup>th</sup> September, 1610, through Cardinal Serra, and on the 31<sup>st</sup> March, 1612, the remaining 80 through Jacobus de Haze, the painter, who was then in Rome.

On the 25<sup>th</sup> October, 1608, when he gave a receipt for the first 500 crowns, he was on the point of leaving Italy, and the settlement of this debt was one of the last matters that occupied him before his return to his own country. On the 28<sup>th</sup> October, when just on setting his foot in the stirrup to begin his journey, he announces his departure to Chieppio in a letter in which he tells him that two days before, he had received very bad news of his mother's health ; but, recalling the arrangements he made on the 25<sup>th</sup>, we may say with certainty that the news had reached him several days earlier. Moreover he was longing to revisit his home and his dearly loved mother. On the 1<sup>st</sup> March, 1608, Philip Rubens wrote to Bocatelli at Rome that his brother was thinking of returning post-haste to his native land (*revolare in patriam cogitat*). He had deferred his departure in order to finish his great work. When that was accomplished, on receiving news that his mother's life was in danger, he did not hesitate an instant, but took French leave, and without going out of his road to pass through Mantua, he left Rome and Italy. In the letter which announces his departure, he expresses the hope that he will see the duke again at Spa, whither the latter had gone in June for reasons of health. But the hope was not realised, for the duke returned to Mantua a few days after Rubens's departure. « I say nothing of my return to Italy », wrote Rubens, « but his Highness's orders I will execute, everywhere



» and always, like an inviolable law. On my return from Flanders I shall give myself the  
» pleasure of going straight to Mantua ».

There is nothing to prove that the duke ever expressed a desire to see Rubens return to him. And probably Rubens never wished to re-enter his service. None the less, he continued to nurse the hope of seeing Italy again some day (1), for, as he himself declares and we can well believe, he had preserved the happiest memories of that country. Mantua and the Gonzagas were equally dear to him. In August, 1630, when he learned that the town had fallen into the hands of the imperial troops, he wrote to his friend Peiresc: We have received very bad news  
» from Italy. On the 22<sup>nd</sup> July, Mantua was taken by the imperial forces, who massacred the  
» greater number of the inhabitants. I am profoundly afflicted by it, for in my youth I lived in  
» that charming land, and served the house of Gonzaga for many years ». It is not impossible that Deodate del Monte, one of Rubens's pupils, accompanied him on his return. Indeed, we know that he returned to Antwerp about the same time as his master, and in the certificate which Rubens gave him on the 26<sup>th</sup> August, 1628, a few days before leaving for Spain, he states that Deodate had followed him everywhere in his travels, both in Italy and in other countries (2).

WORKS PAINTED BY RUBENS IN ITALY. — The years of Rubens's apprenticeship were finished, those of his mastership were about to begin. He left Italy, where he had completed his training, to return to his own country, where he was to advance from triumph to triumph. Before relating this period of his life, it remains to pass in review his productions on the far side of the Alps, besides the works already mentioned, and to examine what studies he carried on there and what influence the Italian masters exercised over his talents.

The pictures we have mentioned were evidently not the only ones he painted for the duke of Mantua. The Dresden Museum has two canvases — Hercules drunk supported by Fauns — and the Crowning of the Virtuous Hero ». No doubt these pictures formed a pair; the height of both is the same (6 ft. 6 in.) They differ, certainly, in breadth, but it is very probable that a wide strip has been cut off the left side of the first picture, for a repetition of the same subject in the Cassel Museum is much wider in proportion than the Dresden example. The two pictures were bought at Mantua in 1743 by the Elector of Saxony, and came from the collection of Duke Vincenzo. Both are allegories: « Hercules drunk » (*Œuvre*. N<sup>o</sup> 623) personifies a hero vanquished by his base passions, drunkenness and lust. With his cup in his hand, he is leaning on the shoulders of two inferior beings to support his body, heavy with drink and reeling, while a little Cupid rides a cock-horse on his club and a faun puts on his lion's skin. « The Hero Crowned » (*Œuvre*. N<sup>o</sup> 828) personifies a warrior who has conquered vice. Armed for the combat, he stands in a proud and manly pose, his hand resting on his lance, embracing the genius of Victory and trampling Drunkenness under foot. Venus and Cupid sit by his side in tears and deeply distressed at his neglect of them, and Slander grieves at finding herself powerless. Both pictures are examples of the allegories in which the learned

(1) Letter of the 22<sup>nd</sup> October, 1626, to Pierre Dupuy, and of the 2<sup>nd</sup> December, 1628, to Peiresc.

(2) CORN. DEBIL : *Het Gulden Cabinet van de edel vry schilder const.*, p. 136.

men of the time exercised their wit and which the public loved. Otho Vænius had been a master in this style. Rubens painted few of these compositions, but he introduced allegories into his historical pictures. Both pictures clearly betray the influence of ancient art; the victorious Hero recalls the statue of Augustus with his sceptre in his hand, the Drunken Hercules and the Satyrs remind us of certain figures in mythological bas-reliefs.

The pictures are of unequal value from the point of view of composition. The Hercules drunk is a jolly and joyful figure; he has reached the point at which cares are forgotten and the world is seen in rosy hues through the vapours of incipient intoxication. The female



HERCULES DRUNK SUPPORTED BY A FAUN AND FAUNESS  
(Museum, Dresden).

faun who is propping him up is so full of frolic and liveliness, the nymph leaping behind her is so light and gay, the satyr and the Cupid astride on the club have something so comic about them that the whole group makes the most joyous band that could possibly be imagined. It holds well together, not only by the unity of the conception, but also by the close and natural arrangement of the figures. In the « Hero crowned » the idea is less happy, the matter drier, the allegory more strained. The theatrical Hero looks like a statue of wood, the group of Venus has no connection with the whole, and the attitude of the Victory lacks

naturalness. The painting in both pictures is smooth, without great relief; the outlines are clear and the effects of light and colour little emphasized. Rubens appears here attracted by the nude, and especially the ample and fleshy female form. His dashing fauness in one and his Victory and Venus in the other already display those white soft breasts and backs that we shall meet with so often in his work, and which mark so clearly his conception of feminine beauty.

No Italian master's influence can be demonstrated in these productions. Rubens proves faithful to the traditions of Otho Vænius, not only in his choice of subjects, but in the processes of painting as well. The forms are fat and fleshy with him as with his master, but the touch is softer and the action more lively: he is still following in the footsteps of a venerated leader, but he is Rubens already. It is not quite certain that these two pictures were painted in Italy; they may have been executed in Antwerp and have formed part of the number which Rubens took into Italy and showed to the duke of Mantua at Venice. They may have been bought by the duke later. We must remark, however, that on the 2<sup>nd</sup> February, 1608, when Rubens offered his « St Gregory » for sale, he makes use, in his letter to Annibale Chieppio, of the fact that

the duke had no picture of his in his galleries. It seems probable, therefore, that they were in another part of the palace and served to decorate some room or other.

From the collection of Vincenzo de Gonzaga, again, comes the « Ecce Homo » which now belongs to the Academy of the Fine Arts in St Petersburg (*Œuvre*. N<sup>o</sup> 272). It represents Christ between the soldier, who is removing the red drapery from the lacerated breast and arms of the Saviour, and Pilate, who is showing him to the people. The figures are powerfully built, of Herculean robustness; the painting of them is dry and clear and stands out from very black shadows. They show, especially the Christ and the Pilate, the types affected by Rubens during his residence in Italy, which may be used to fix the date of the works he painted at this time. The breast of the mild and suffering Christ is broad and deeply modelled, the arms robust and the muscles prominent; one of the locks of his long hair falls over his neck and lies in a curl on his shoulder. This is the same figure we find again in the « Christ and St Augustine » in the Academy of San Fernando at Madrid, and in the « Christ with the twelve Apostles », two works of the master's Italian period. We find it again in several of the pictures painted by Rubens after his return home, such as the « Christ giving the keys to Peter », executed for the tomb of Pieter Breughel about 1613, and the « Christ and St Thomas » of the same period in the Antwerp Museum. The figure of Pilate is still more characteristic of his early years: it is a model of manly vigour: a powerful head with an abundance of curly hair, one lock of which falls over his forehead, a bushy beard, prominent jaws and regular and pronounced features. The painter must have met the model in Rome, and a drawing in the Palazzo Corsini is probably the first reproduction of him. We meet with him again, among others, in the « Fishing that provided the Tribute money », which is known from the engraving published by Nicolas Lauwers (*Œuvre*. N<sup>o</sup> 262); in the « Ajax and Cassandra » in the Liechtenstein Gallery and in the « Death of Seneca » in the Pinakothek at Munich.



THE VISITATION OF THE VIRGIN (Borghese Gallery, Rome).

The « St Jerome » in the Dresden Museum (*Œuvre*. N<sup>o</sup> 463) also comes from an Italian



collection, that of the duke of Modena. The work is remarkable for the depth of its religious sentiment. The colour is sweet; there is dryness in the robust muscular system characteristic of the artist's works during his later Italian period, but the powerful effects of light, which are equally characteristic of them, are lacking. It is a fine study of an old man, painted with much cleverness and skill, but without being cold. The smallest folds of the skin of the breast, face and hands are minutely rendered; and the lion too is painted with much care.

It was at Genoa, or rather for the inhabitants of Genoa, that Rubens painted « The Circumcision » (*Œuvre*. N° 156) presented by the marquis Nicolas Pallavicini to the church of the Jesuits of that town. The work, which suffers from the influence of Caravaggio, is one of Rubens's least successful. He painted also for the Genoese « Hercules » and « Deianira » (*Œuvre*. Nos 617-618), two pictures of very superior merit, the portraits of the marchioness de Grimaldi (*Œuvre*. N° 962) and Brigitta Spinola (*Œuvre*. N° 1063) which are dated 1606, and finally the « Iole » and « Adonis lying dead in the arms of Venus » which we mentioned above.

In the case of other pictures, it is difficult to determine whether they were painted at Mantua or Rome, although they are found in the latter. Among these is, first of all, the « Visit of the Virgin to St Elizabeth » in the Borghese palace (*Œuvre*. N° 308 (3)). This is a first rendering of the subject which Rubens painted afterwards, in 1614, on the left shutter of the « Descent from the Cross ». It is a graceful rustic scene: a young woman, coming to visit one of her relatives, is being received by her with cordiality and congratulated on the occasion of her approaching maternity; a servant is carrying the luggage, while a cock and hen strut about picking up food without heeding the great event. The Gospel scene is treated with so much truth that it might be taken from daily life, and were it not for the visitor's ample robes, the superb and quite Venetian bearing of the servant, and the palatial appearance of Elizabeth's house, we should fancy ourselves not in Palestine or Italy, but on the doorstep of a middle-class dwelling in Flanders. The picture is not a master-piece, and is only remarkable as the first idea for one of the artist's most celebrated creations.

The figure of Elizabeth especially attracts attention. Adolphe Rozenberg takes it to be a portrait of Rubens's mother and the same woman that he painted in a picture in the Pinakothek at Munich (*Œuvre*. N° 1033), where she is given the name of Maria Pypelinckx. In this latter, of which there is another copy in the Fahne collection in the castle of Roland, we do not recognise the woman of « The Visit to Elizabeth », and we hold the Munich picture to be not a portrait but a study head used by Rubens, without alteration, in his « Marriage of Mary and Joseph » (*Œuvre*. N° 142). But we freely grant that the St Elizabeth may well be a portrait of Rubens's mother. If we had to imagine Maria Pypelinckx, we could form no juster idea of her. In the affectionate and kindly welcome she gives the young woman she appears calm and serene, commanding confidence, her face beaming with the inner satisfaction born of a pure conscience after a long and well spent life. Her costume and her features proclaim her a Flemish woman of the middle classes in easy circumstances. All who knew her must have retained a sympathetic remembrance of her, and he whose mother she was must have revered and cherished her. Her manner is far more cordial than that of the woman in the Pinakothek at Munich, whose face bears traces of weariness and disillusionment. There are, certainly, several

replicas of this latter, but, equally, the St Elizabeth of the « Visit of Mary », with her handsome regular face, her large brown eyes, her keen glance, her straight nose, her receding lips and her prominent jaw-bones, is to be met with in a large number of compositions. We see her in the St Anne of the « Education of the Virgin » in the Antwerp museum, the old woman crouching near the basket in which Erichthonius is lying (*Œuvre*. No 607) and the mother of St John in the « Holy Family » in the Cologne Museum (*Œuvre*. No 229).

There is not the least doubt that Rubens painted his father and mother. In the division of his estate, his son Albert Rubens was allotted « two portraits of his grandfather and grandmother Rubens ». We find these same pictures again in the inventory of Albert Rubens's estate, described as : « Item a hinged picture, formed of two portraits on wood of the grandfather and grandmother of the late Secretary Rubens ». These two portraits, therefore, painted on wood and of equal size, formed a diptych. We find nothing among Rubens's works to answer to it. Suppose that the wings had been separated, there could be two panels of equal size, one representing a man and the other a woman. It is true that there are pendants of this kind in existence, notably in the Hermitage in St Petersburg, nos 582 and 583 ; in the Antwerp Museum there is a portrait of a man, the pendant of which is in a private gallery ; but these pictures represent people still young, and it is quite improbable that they are the portraits of Rubens's parents.

Other pictures to be assigned to the period of Rubens's residence in Rome are : the « Romulus and Remus » in the Capitoline Museum (*Œuvre*. No 801), the « Death of Seneca » in the Pinakothek in Munich (*Œuvre*. No 812), the heads of « Tiberius and Agrippina » in the Liechtenstein gallery at Vienna (*Œuvre*. No 1066), the « Cock and the Pearl » in the Suermondt Museum at Aix-la-Chapelle (*Œuvre*. No 1167), and the « Landscape with the ruins of the Palatine Hill » in the salle Lacaze in the Louvre (*Œuvre*. No 1175).

It was naturally the recollection of the origin of the city in which he lived and which was always the object of his veneration, that inspired him with the « Romulus and Remus ». The picture, which was the first in which Rubens painted children, has no striking merit to recommend it ; the painting is dry, with little effect of light and colour, sober and true, moreover, with no trace of romantic arrangement. It was probably one of the first things he did at Rome, and dates from 1602. In his estate we find a second rendering of the same subject.

The « Death of Seneca » was painted after a statue he saw in the villa Borghese and which is now in the Louvre. The painting is dry, the outlines firm, the figures hard, and the nude body is illuminated by a leaden and bronze light with dark shadows ; but the copper plate and the water in it are painted very cleverly. Rubens drew this antique statue from three sides ; the three drawings are in the cabinet of prints in the Hermitage at St Petersburg.

The « Landscape with the ruins of the Palatine Hill » not only reveals the place where it was painted by its subject, but the engraving made of it, in Rubens's life-time, by Schelte a Bolswert has the inscription : « painted by Rubens at Rome » (*Pet. Paul Rubens pinxit Romæ*).

The « Cock and Pearl » has a little story attached to it which tells us the origin of the picture and of a portrait now lost. The two pictures were painted at Rome for the doctor, Johann Faber, who tells the story in these words : « Finally I will mention Peter Paul Rubens,

an enlightened amateur of antique bronzes and marbles, who, like his brother Philip, celebrated for his literary works, was a pupil of Justus Lipsius, of whom they both deserved to be the worthy successors. But Peter Paul Rubens offers a shining example of rare good fortune. He became celebrated as a painter in Germany, the Low Countries, Italy, France, England and Spain. At Antwerp, in less than twenty years, he succeeded in amassing more than two hundred thousand pieces of gold. One day, when, with God's help, I had had the happiness to cure him at Rome, of a pleurisy from which he suffered much, he painted me a cock, which he accompanied with this legend, which, though jesting, displays his erudition :



ROMULUS AND REMUS (Capitol, Rome).

celebrated Johann Faber, doctor of medicine, my Aesculapius, I dedicate this picture in fulfilment of a vow made for the restoring of my health when I was doomed. He also painted my portrait, an excellent likeness, on a very large canvas. This work is highly esteemed by painters, because of its most artistic execution (1).

We know from a letter of the 22<sup>nd</sup> July, 1606, from Philip Rubens to Erycius Puteanus, that his brother had been ill, not long before, at Rome, and it follows that the pictures painted for Johann Faber were executed about this time. What you write gives me great pleasure, we read, I am very grateful to you for it, and would have thanked you before if my brother's illness had not prevented me (2).

Several pictures of this period evidently owe their origin to the study of the productions of ancient sculpture which Rubens followed in the eternal city. Such are the « Laughing Faun and drinking Satyr » in the Pinakothek at Munich (*Œuvre*. N<sup>o</sup> 609), the « Nymphs and Fauns plucking fruit » (*Œuvre*. N<sup>o</sup> 648) and a couple of others of less importance. The second of these pictures Rubens repainted afterwards in a more perfect form ; the first is one of the masterpieces of his youth. It represents an old Satyr drinking, while another younger one holds a bunch of grapes in his hand, and constitutes one of Rubens's rare but happy manifestations of humour. The two figures represent two moments of the same action, drinking and being drunk. The drinking Satyr is absorbed in his occupation ; he takes care not to toss the liquor down his throat at one gulp, to swallow it greedily ; he sips it attentively, respectfully, contemplatively. Engrossed in what he is doing, he does it with downcast eyes, detached from the outer world, living only for and through the act he is accomplishing ; he is unconscious of everything that is happening, and he does not even notice that the liquid is running in little streams from both sides of his chin. The other, absorbed in the sweet delight of being

(1) JOANNES FABER : *Rerum medicarum Nova Hispaniæ thesaurus*. (Rome, 1651), p. 831.

(2) *Correspondance*, I, p. 339.





Justus Lipsius and his pupils  
(Pitti Palace, Florence)





Heinrich Brauns - Gemälde 6





drunk, is plunged into a blissful reverie, and his vague look seems to contemplate afar off celestial visions; a smile of satisfaction wanders o'er his lips and wrinkles his cheeks. Theirs is not the uproarious joy of the gross drinker, but the voluptuous delectation of the epicure, happy in his airy intoxication. The painting is careful, vigorous, firm, and rather dry; the shadows on the necks are heavy, almost black, and motionless. Rubens is here above all the draughtsman who by preference has studied man after the antique.

During these days in Italy he had already chosen Satyrs and their kind to express material enjoyment; but into the works he created during his residence in the land of antique statues and cameos he put something witty and sly, which does not recur in his later productions. The latter express the bestial passions with more force and brutality, and more clearly mark out for reprobation their elements of grossness and degradation.

To the Italian period probably belong also: *Nymphs crowning the Goddess of Plenty*, a little picture treated in the manner of a sketch, in the Academy of St Luca at Rome (*Œuvre*. No 652), *St George slaying the Dragon* in the Madrid Museum (*Œuvre*. No 434), of which the Naples Museum and the Munich Pinakothek have each a copy, and *Samson opening the jaws of the lion*, in the Stockholm Museum (*Œuvre*. No 113), which was found in Rubens's house after his death and was bought by the king of Spain.

It was certainly in Italy that he painted the picture known under the name of the *Four Philosophers* (*Œuvre*. No 977). It is now in the Pitti gallery at Florence. Here we see Justus Lipsius sitting behind a table covered with a Persian carpet in black and red; an open book lies before him; other books and a writing desk are on the table. The professor is dressed in a heavy robe, with a white pleated collar rising above it; he is giving a lesson and explaining one of his favourite authors. On his right sits Philip Rubens, pen in hand; on his left another of his pupils, with his hand lying on an open book, is listening attentively to the master's discourse, while his great hound rests his head and one paw on his knee. At the extreme left of the picture, Peter Paul stands behind his brother, thrown up by a red hanging. On the right, above the table, is a niche containing an antique bust and a small glass vase in which are three tulips. In the distance stretches a landscape with the ruins of ancient Rome.

There is no question of the identity of three of the figures. Justus Lipsius is here represented exactly as he is in the pictures and engravings of a later date; with a long bony face, an unusually high forehead, a thin nose, hollow cheeks and sunken eyes, and a full beard; he is quite the scholar attenuated by study, petrified by assiduous intercourse with buried centuries. Philip Rubens, whose face still shows youth and freshness, has already reached manhood and is like his brother; he wears a full beard and has curly hair, as we see in the portrait prefixed to his biography in *S. Asterii Homiliæ*; but he looks much younger. Rubens is easily recognised. But who is the fourth? Tradition has named him Hugo Grotius, with no reason for doing so at all. In our opinion he is no other than Jan Woverius, the intimate friend of Philip and Peter Paul Rubens, and one of the favourite pupils of Justus Lipsius. As we have seen, he was in Mantua with the two brothers in 1602, and it is probable that Rubens may have painted his portrait at that time. The supposed bust of Seneca in the niche over the heads of the four men is painted after the antique marble Rubens bought in Rome and brought back to Antwerp. The landscape in the distance represents the ruins of the Palatine, which Rubens

painted at Rome (*Œuvre*, No 1175). It was in Rome that this picture was executed ; the view of the ruins is of service in settling the spot where it was painted ; it is an act of homage paid to the great master of archaeology by three of his admirers, by three brothers, as Woverius has it. I believed at first that the picture was painted in 1602, at Verona, at the time of the meeting of the great scholar's two pupils with Rubens ; but the Justus Lipsius who appears in the composition is the faithful reproduction of the engraving made in 1605 by Pieter de Jode after the portrait painted by Abraham Janssens and presented to Justus Lipsius by Woverius. When Philip Rubens went to Rome, in the second half of 1605, he brought that engraving with him, and it was probably in the following year, after the death of the celebrated professor, that Rubens painted this picture, dedicated to the memory of the deceased by himself and the two other admirers. To our knowledge, it has never been out of Italy.

As a painting, it is thoroughly characteristic of the last portion of Rubens's stay in the south. The grouping is still clumsy, and the drawing, which lacks boldness, is certainly the weak side that distinguishes his productions during this period. None the less we are struck by the progress achieved during the six months of his residence in Italy. The brush-work is firm and vigorous, the light warm and rather red ; the black gowns introduce a grave and sombre note, the soft tints of the hands, the luminous flesh, and the clear colours of the carpet, the hanging, the books, and the background, give the whole an air of fulness and harmony. The picture may be said to inaugurate the mastership of Rubens ; he is now emancipated, and entered into full possession of his originality. His colour is rich and brilliant, his light transparent, and his touch unctuous ; by these signs he is distinguished from all the Italians, and by one other. In portraiture, at least, he is already in search of nature and truth ; his characters are neither posed nor painted after any conventional model, they are alive ; he has represented them as he saw them, full of blooming health and of red blood flowing beneath the clear skins of men from the north, bathed in light, honestly, without exaggeration, broadly too, and without minute research into the little details of the face.

He painted himself ; and as this is the first time we meet with a portrait of him, we hold it well worth while pausing over it for a moment. In 1606 Rubens was twenty-nine ; he wears a full well-set beard with long upturned moustaches, and fairly long hair parted on the left. His hair and beard are pale chestnut colour, with auburn lights. His forehead recedes slightly, is very high and still further extended by an already marked baldness, which he tries to hide by brushing his hair over it. His large brown eyes are almond-shaped. His complexion is very clear, his nose straight, regular, and fleshy, with wide nostrils. His thick lips show a sensuous nature. His jaws are prominent, and his ears well curled at the edge. The whole forms a handsome face, manly and full of energy. The expression is calm and speaks of indifference to his surroundings ; and the looks he throws over his shoulder springs proudly out of the frame. He is completely enveloped in a black cloak, and nothing but his head is visible.

The name of Woverius, which we have assigned to the fourth figure, has been contested, without the suggestion of any alternative. Woverius, it is said, was twenty-six in 1602, when Rubens saw him at Verona, while the unknown in the picture appears to be at least forty. We are not of that opinion ; for if the head of Woverius is that of an older man, the same may be said of the two Rubens brothers. If their friend was of vigorous build and marked



features with thick moustaches and chin-beard, their physiognomy is marked also, and their beards, which they wear full, seem to indicate a greater age. Woverius, it is said again, shows no resemblance to the portrait we know of him by Vandyck. That is true, but he was fifty-eight when Vandyck painted him (1); time might have altered his features; without considering that the painter was not looking at them close enough for any question of resemblance. Nevertheless, we recognize in this portrait by Rubens, the main lines of the Woverius of Vandyck. The long thin nose, which, in the portrait of 1606, ends in a rather more aquiline curve than in that of 1634, the long nostrils, the chin-beard and the thick moustache, the hair which only begins to grow very high up on the forehead, the prominent jaw-bone that ploughs the cheek, the ear with the lobe clearly cut at the bottom, and even the unpleated linen collar, are found in both portraits, and argue the identity of the two models.

Of the portrait of Woverius, as it appears in the picture in the Pitti Gallery, Rubens made a reproduction, which belongs to the duke of Arenberg at Brussels (*Œuvre*. N<sup>o</sup> 1079). This portrait is smaller than the one in the group of *Four Philosophers* with which in other respects it is identical. The carpet on the table occurs again, the books lying before the model, the landscape in the background, and even part of the bust of Seneca. Carefully, and yet broadly painted, it is not inferior in artistic value to the figure in the original, which is, moreover, the best in the group.

Shortly after the meeting at Verona, Woverius left for Belgium. In 1603 he married Maria Clarissa at Antwerp. In the last years of the life of Justus Lipsius he had laid plans for having Philip Rubens appointed as his successor; but Philip annulled them by returning to Italy. In 1614, Woverius became alderman of Antwerp; in 1620 he was appointed councillor and commissary of domains and finances by the Archdukes. Later he took part in the negotiations with the United Provinces and Spain for the renewal of the twelve years' truce; in 1624 he was sent for this purpose to Madrid, where Philip IV knighted him. Throughout his life he remained one of the most important men of his country. He died on the 23<sup>rd</sup> September, 1635. In his youth he had studied letters and had written several small works in Latin. In 1603 Trognonius printed for him a eulogy of Justus Lipsius; in 1607, a defence of Justus Lipsius against the attacks he was subjected to; in 1609, a eulogy of the Archdukes Albert and Isabella; and in 1614 a life of Simon of Valencia. For this last work Rubens drew a portrait of the Blessed Simon, which was engraved by Cornelis Galle. He was the faithful friend of the artist all his life. On the 17<sup>th</sup> July, 1622, his son Frans, aged twelve, delivered a Latin eulogy of the late Archduke Albert; this work of an infant prodigy was printed in the following year and Rubens painted the portrait of the young orator. The portrait was engraved by Cornelis Galle.

STUDIES AFTER THE ITALIAN MASTERS. — Rubens studied much in Italy, and after many masters; this is proved by the pictures and drawings he brought back from that country, as well as by the reminiscences of their creations which we find in his works. We know that he

(1) The engraving by Pontius has the inscription *Actatis sua* LVIII A<sup>o</sup> M.DC.XXXII. The last figure is indistinct, and I think it should read M.DC.XXXIV. Woverius was born in 1576, and was not 58 till 1634.

painted, after Raphael, the *Portrait of Baldassarre Castiglione* (*Œuvre*. No 912), besides six pictures of *The Acts of the Apostles* (*Œuvre*. Nos 370-375), a *Psyche* (*Œuvre*. No 672), and a *Head of St John* (*Œuvre*. No 244), which was in his own possession at his death, but has since been lost. After Titian he painted dozens of pictures, of which some only are known to us : the *Feast of the Bacchantes* and the *Sacrifice to Venus* (*Œuvre*. Nos 573, 706), now in the Stockholm Museum, the originals of which belonged, at the time of his



STUDY FOR THE LAST SUPPER -- Drawing (Duke of Devonshire, London).

residence in Italy, to Cardinal Aldobrandini at Rome, and are now in the Madrid Museum ; two portraits of *Isabella d'Este* done at Mantua, one of which is in the Imperial Museum at Vienna (*Œuvre*. No 972) ; the portrait of a *Young Venetian* (*Œuvre*. No 1125) and the *Venus at her toilet* in the Liechtenstein Gallery at Vienna (*Œuvre*. No 689) ; the portrait of a *Young Venetian Woman* in the same collection and the *Four Venetian Courtesans* », which are in the inventory of his estate (*Œuvre* IV, p. 319). The portrait of the Doge Cornaro (*Œuvre*. No 1323) which he had engraved later by Christoffel Jegher, and which now belongs to M. Roussille at Brussels, was also probably painted after Titian.

In the inventory of his effects appear « three cloathes pasted uppon bord, beinge the Triumph of Julius Cesar after Andrew Mantegna, not full made » (*Œuvre*. Nos 715-717). These were free imitations of the master-piece of the great Italian painter, which were then in the Palazzo San Sebastiano and now form part of the Hampton Court collection. One of these imitations by Rubens is preserved in the National Gallery in London. To tell the truth, it is not

a copy; only the left half is painted after Mantegna. The finest part, which contains the priest with the long beard, the two men leading a bull to sacrifice, the young man with the two rams, the musicians, dancing-girls, and people grouped on the hill, was added by Rubens.



HERO CROWNED BY VICTORY (Dresden Museum)

From the Italian master he borrowed the elephants, the candelabra, and the figures leading bulls. The canvas still preserved contains three out of the nine parts of which Mantegna's work was composed, so that Rubens's three pictures represented the entire triumph.

After Michael Angelo da Caravaggio he painted the *Christ borne to the Tomb* (*Œuvre*, No 323), which is now to be found in the Liechtenstein Gallery. The original work was painted for a chapel in the Chiesa Nuova, and is now in the Vatican Museum.

In Italy Rubens also made a number of drawings after the Renaissance masters, of which a certain number have survived. He made pen and ink copies of several fragments of Lionardo



da Vinci's « Last Supper »; Soutman used them as models for his engraving of the celebrated picture. After the same master he made the drawing which Edelinck followed in his engraving of a group from the « Battle of Anghiari » (or rather of Cascina). After Michael Angelo he drew six of the Prophets and two of the Sibyls, the « Creation of Adam », and the « Holy Family », in the ceiling of the Sixtine chapel; after Raphael the « Vision of Ezekiel », and the « Blind Elymas » from the cartoon of the « Punishment of Elymas »; after Titian the « Death of St Peter Martyr » and the « Battle of Cadora »; after Paolo Veronese a « Christ in the house of Simon the Pharisee »; after Pordenone a « Christian knight led by a Spirit », which he had seen in the church of St Peter at Treviso; after Giulio Romano « The Rape of Hylas » and « The Triumph of Scipio »; after Polidoro da Caravaggio, « The Rape of the Sabine Women » and a « Procession of Lictors »; after Primaticcio « Pluto judging the dead »; to mention only the most important and authentic drawings.

In all these works, whether drawings or pictures, and especially in the « Triumph of Cæsar », we see that Rubens was no servile imitator of his models. He substituted his rich colouring and robust forms for the slender outlines and neutral tints of the creations of Mantegna. His interpretations of Titian's « Sacrifice to Venus » and « Feast of Bacchantes » are no less remarkable. In these two pictures, the colours have become more brilliant and colder than they generally are either in the Italian master or in Rubens himself; they are neither reddish, as in the former, nor warm as in the latter; they are clear, gay, youthful and joyous, but they have a look of porcelain which is like neither Titian nor Rubens. In the « Sacrifice to Venus » the opulent forms of the rushing Bacchantes and the sly faces of the children, and the slender and slightly twisted trees in the « Feast of Bacchantes » show the characteristics of the Flemish master. In the last picture we already see the model of the sleeping Diana and the dancing peasants that occur among his later works.

THE INFLUENCE OF ITALIAN ART ON RUBENS. — The Italian primitives left Rubens indifferent. The earliest of them must have seemed to him barbarous. As for the *quattro-centisti*, from Fra Angelico to Lionardo da Vinci, the whole band of these delicate idealists, with their tender souls and exquisite art, whom we find so sweetly and irresistibly captivating, must have seemed to him feeble in temperament and timid in workmanship. His was no simple soul, that marvelled at the beauty of nature and was convinced of the kinship of celestial spirits with the dwellers upon earth; his was no imaginative mind, to translate legends and miraculous dreams into sensible form: he believed in facts alone, and expressed nothing but what he could see and understand. The latest arrivals, the masters who were as interested in the life of the body as in that of the soul, were the only ones to attract him; Raphael, the painter of beauty, Michael Angelo, the interpreter of strength, Mantegna, the admirer of antiquity, da Vinci, *par excellence* the charmer. The Venetians fascinated him with their beautiful, brilliant, or sweet colour. At Florence and at Rome, he improved his drawing; at Venice, his painting. There was no great master that he had not seen and studied attentively.

But he made himself a place by their side, as the great dramatic painter of life, movement, and heroic action. Michael Angelo had preceded him as the creator of colossi; but there is a great difference between these two fathers of Titans. The giants of heaven and earth created

by the chisel of the latter remained of stone even when he transferred them to canvas ; Rubens's giants were men of flesh and blood called into being by a painter ; the heroes of Michael Angelo were grave thinkers, Rubens's were beings born for life and action ; the Italian master's men were too mighty for their passive existence, Rubens's, powerfully muscled though they are, are continually throwing themselves into action that surpasses their strength. Death and Sleep are the master-pieces of the one ; Discontent and Hatred are his dominating sentiments ; the heroes of the other are Amazons in battle, implacable executioners, martyrs bleeding from every limb, intrepid hunters, Virgins ravished to heaven in holy ecstasy, Satyrs feasting, all who in battle are careless of life, all who joyously delight in life in all its fulness.

From Raphael Rubens borrowed figures and groups, and learned to arrange the characters engaged in the action skilfully, and to give them beautiful attitudes ; but the painter of harmonious outline could not conquer the depths of his robust personality. Among Raphael's pupils there was one whose works he studied much, and whose artistic nature had much that was analogous to his own ; I mean Giulio Romano, who had covered the walls of the ducal palaces of Mantua with his Titans ; the influence of his violence on the heroic manner of Rubens is incontestable. It was in his works and in some of Tintoretto's that Peter Paul found that boldness of movement which later characterized his own work to such a high degree.

He did not conceal his predilection for Titian. At his death, he was found to possess ten pictures by the great Venetian, and thirty copies he had made after his works. The Italian writer, Marco Boschini, published at Venice in 1660 a book entitled *la Carta del Navegar pitoresco*. He relates that when a Venetian painter visited one of Rubens's friends, Justus Suttermans, at Florence, he was shown several pictures which he took to be Titians. But Suttermans told him that they were Rubens's work, and added that the Antwerp master loved Titian as a lady her lover. « He was formerly my intimate friend in Flanders, » he declared further, « I used to see him often, and when we came to talk of Titian, he assured me, without » passion but with an accent of profound conviction, that Titian had made painting delightful, » and that he was the greatest master that had ever existed ». Granting that the author of *la Carta del Navegar pitoresco*, in his quality of panegyrist of the Venetian painters, may have somewhat exaggerated the tone, his testimony is none the less striking and trustworthy. In fact, among Rubens's predecessors there is no one to whom, in spite of great differences, he is so closely related as to Titian ; their works show the same variety of subjects, the same healthy conception of life, the same taste for vigorous forms and intense colours.

Though Rubens never became an imitator of any of the Italian masters, we find in his later works obviously characteristic reminiscences of some of their most celebrated pictures. Thus he borrowed the arrangement of his « Elevation of the Cross » from that in Tintoretto's Calvary in the Scuola di San Rocco at Venice ; his « Banquet of Herod » recalls the feasts of Paolo Veronese ; his « Dispute of the Holy Sacrament », Raphael's picture on the same subject, and his « Last Judgments », the frescos of Michael Angelo. But these are free adaptations, many of which are superior to their originals.

The contemporary Italians certainly exercised some influence over Rubens. On more than

one side of his talent, he belongs to their school. Like them he created by choice the most dramatic subjects, put truth above everything else, and much preferred action to the contemplative life. The influence of the *chiaro-oscuro* painters is manifest also in the powerful effects of light in his earliest works. More than that, he did not confine himself to borrowing their subjects, he made use also of their forms. Thus it was with Agostino's Caracci's « Last Communion of St Jerome », which he rechristened, it is true, but confined himself to modifying in the « Last Communion of St Francis ». In one of his latest works, the « Martyrdom of St Peter », again, he recalls the compositions of Guido Reni and Caravaggio on the same

subject. Sandrart has already pointed out that he had studied this last painter with delight, and had imitated the vigour of his colouring.



FERDINANDO GONZAGA  
Drawing (Stockholm Museum).

THE FORMATION OF RUBENS. Rubens, then, came to a very great degree under the influence of the artists of the south; under them he served a second apprenticeship, and owed them his high artistic culture. Conquered by the admiration inspired in him by the creations of the great masters, and dazzled by their brilliance, he had at first some trouble in finding his own direction. At the beginning of his residence in Italy, he produced several feeble works, like the pictures he painted for Santa Croce in Gerusalemme; in others, the imitation of great models stifled all his originality, as in the « Baptism of Christ », in which, more clearly perhaps than in the work of any other artist, we see

him striving to combine the vigour of Michael Angelo with the beauty of Raphael. But, as time went on, he escaped from outside influences, and became himself.

The works he produced in Italy differ greatly among themselves, much more than those he painted afterwards. They determine the evolution and transformation of his talent. Comparing one with another the few canvases to which we are able to assign precise dates with certainty, we arrive at the conclusion that those which he painted during his first stay in Mantua and his journey into Spain offer no very marked characteristics. Relatively, the composition is confused, the colour heavy, the light hard and the influence of the Italians scarcely apparent. In the pictures he painted during his second stay in Mantua, in 1604 and 1605, for the church of the Jesuits, that influence is direct and dominant, at any rate in the two shutters; there is more harmony in the tone and the composition; the forms are more beautiful and softer, the life more powerful and more personal; the colours are sweeter, while still remaining dry, flat, spread in large masses and bounded by very sharp outlines; the light is more abundant, but it has not yet all its power nor all its effect. We find the same characteristic features in the « St Jerome » in the Dresden Museum, in the « Ecce Homo » at St Petersburg, and the « Romulus and Remus », although the last two were probably painted at Rome in one of the following years. During the last period of his residence in Italy, which extended from the end of 1605 to 1608, the effects of light and colour acquired more power, all the



figures have more life and grace, though they are still grouped without art and almost clumsily; the harmony of the strong colours becomes richer, the brush-work more masterly, and originality is far more clearly manifest. To this period belong the « Justus Lipsius and his pupils », the « Satyrs Drinking » at Munich, the « St Gregory », the « Feast of Bacchantes » and the « Sacrifice to Venus » after Titian.

The whole extent of his residence in Italy was a time of apprenticeship. He owed his formation, in the first place, evidently to his national genius, and in the second to the long and serious study he gave to the best that his predecessors, in his native land and in Italy, had to teach him; he was their legitimate heir. But he was also a child of his century, and clearly reflected its dominant tendencies. When that century began, and with it the epoch of his mastership, the first Renaissance had long been a thing of the past; art no longer followed the purely ideal and had ceased to be enamoured of flawless beauty; and that renewal of creative imagination was still far off, in which all was young and fresh, in which men rejoiced to see the opening of the charming flowers their fancy created. There, in the south, even the summer with its fertilizing sun was passed, and the autumn had begun. Artists believed themselves matured by experience, knowledge and practice; they no longer gave expression to love, meditation, humble adoration; they celebrated strength and passion, agonised suffering and courageous strife.



FRANCESCO GONZAGA  
Drawing (Stockholm Museum).

In Roman literature, which was universally cultivated in those days, it was no longer Vergil nor Horace that was placed in the first rank; the emphatic Lucian and the melodramatic Seneca commanded all the admiration. The Latin of Cicero, which in the XVI century, the days of Erasmus, had been regarded as the language of all cultivated minds, had lost its preeminence, and Justus Lipsius, Philip Rubens and their contemporaries set greater store by the knotty Tacitus and the philosophical Seneca, whose forced style and uncommon expressions they strove to assimilate.

Seventeenth century art loved muscular forms and striking subjects. Its divine and human ideal was Hercules, the mighty hero, ever fighting and ever victorious. It might be said that after having seen the representation of the fair and smiling side of life for so long, and after having heard for so long the celebration of noble actions, mankind felt the need of seeing also the suffering there is on earth, and hearing the tears that are the price of the bays. Like the Italian painters of this epoch, and with infinitely more talent, Rubens contributed to the satisfaction of this need. He represents the maturity of universal art, at the moment when, exhausted in Italy, it flowered afresh with new vigour on the still young and fertile soil of Flanders. He is the great dramatic poet of painting and comes between Shakespeare and Corneille, like them personifying the spirit of the times and uniting in his creations the Teutonic and the Latin worlds, of which they were the loftiest expression.

We have studied Rubens as an artist in the works he produced on the far side of the

Alps and the Pyrenees ; we may now begin to form an idea of him as a man from his doings there and from the letters he wrote. He succeeded very quickly in gaining the confidence of the duke of Mantua. That is most clearly proved by the fact that at twenty-six years of age the artist was entrusted with an important mission, which could only be brought to a satisfactory conclusion by a man of good presence, clear vision and the power of acquitting himself with ability in any circumstances. He was loaded with seductive attentions by his patron and his high officials, without ever becoming careless of his dignity ; he proved himself a man of sage counsels, skilful in matters of business, and full of order and foresight. He knew how to make his calculations ; though guiltless of cupidity, he demanded his due and had no intention of being defrauded of it. In questions of material interest he behaved generously and expected to be treated in the same way ; in questions of art, he would never sacrifice his dignity. When he was advised to avail himself of the assistance of Spanish artists to repaint the damaged pictures he was bringing from Italy to king Philip III, he politely but firmly refused their collaboration. When the duke of Mantua wished to send him into France to paint the portraits of pretty women for his collection, he thanked him for the doubtful honour paid him, and asked to be given a commission more worthy of his powers. The fame of those powers had already crossed the bounds of the circle in which the artist lived. He knew it himself, and did not pretend not to ; above all he insisted, to use his own expressions, on being himself, and not being confused with any other master however great.

When Rubens left Italy, he had reached his thirty-first year ; he was a man in age and a master in his art. His genius was not precocious ; his apprenticeship, indeed, had been exceptionally long. During those long years his output was moderate ; he practised and prepared himself by the completest and most varied studies that ever artist laid upon himself ; on his return to his native land he produced master-piece after master-piece with astonishing fertility and unequalled excellence, and thus reaped the fruits of his courageous apprenticeship.

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VIEW OF ST. MICHAEL'S ABBEY, ANTWERP.

### CHAPTER III

## RUBENS ON HIS RETURN TO ANTWERP HIS FIRST WORKS IN THAT TOWN (1608-1611)

THE TOMB OF MARIA PYPELINCKX — RUBENS APPOINTED COURT-PAINTER — THE NETHERLANDS AT THE DATE OF RUBENS'S RETURN — ALBERT AND ISABELLA — ANTWERP AT THE BEGINNING OF THE XVII CENTURY — RUBENS IN ANTWERP — HIS FIRST MARRIAGE — THE FIRST PICTURES HE PAINTED AT ANTWERP — THE DISPUTE OF THE HOLY SACRAMENT — THE ADORATION OF THE MAGI — THE ELEVATION OF THE CROSS — BIBLICAL SUBJECTS — THE BATTLE OF THE AMAZONS — LAST PICTURES IN HIS FIRST MANNER.



ISABELLA BRANT  
Drawing (British Museum, London).

THE TOMB OF MARIA PYPELINCKX. — On the 28<sup>th</sup> October, 1608, when Rubens left Rome, his mother had been dead nine days. She was buried in the church of the Abbey of St Michael, not far from the house she had occupied in the Kloosterstraat, and in which Rubens himself settled on his return. In the chapel where Maria Pypelinckx was buried, he erected, at his own expense, an altar over which he placed the St Gregory he had brought back from Rome. The altar bore an inscription relating that on Michaelmas Day, 1601, the artist and his wife Isabella Brant, in filial piety to the best of mothers, had consecrated to Our Lady this altar erected and decorated by him. The picture remained there till the year 1794 ; then it was sent to Paris with the other artistic treasures carried off by the soldiers of the French republic. By a decree of the Emperor Napoleon



of the 15<sup>th</sup> February, 1811, it was given to the Museum of Grenoble, where it still remains. The directors of the Napoleon Museum did not consider it worthy to be kept in the Louvre, and the annoying result of this ignorance of its high artistic value was that, in 1815, when the looted pictures that were in Paris were restored to us, this beautiful Rubens remained in France (1).

RUBENS APPOINTED COURT-PAINTER. — In taking leave of Annibale Chieppio, Rubens had expressed the hope that his absence from Italy would not be a long one. If he had really intended to return once more to Mantua, he soon renounced the idea, for so far from thinking of leaving Antwerp to go and resume his functions as court-painter to duke Vincenzo, in the very year of his return he accepted the same post at the court of the sovereigns of his own country. « When he returned to Belgium in 1609, » writes his nephew in the *Vita*, « his fame had already spread far and wide, and the Archdukes Albert and Isabella, who wished to be painted by him, appointed him court-painter, and bound him to them by chains of gold lest » he should return to Italy, whither the high prices paid for his pictures might attract him ». The chains of gold referred to are no mere figure of speech ; in fact, on the 8<sup>th</sup> August, 1609, the Archdukes' treasurer payed the goldsmith Robrecht Staes a sum of 300 florins for a gold chain and a medal bearing the effigy of their Highnesses, which were to be delivered to the Antwerp painter, Peter Paul Rubens. On the 23<sup>rd</sup> September following the letters patent were drawn up, nominating him painter to the court because of his great knowledge and capacity in painting and in several other arts. He was appointed a salary of five hundred Flemish pounds of forty gross, in other words, five hundred florins, nearly equivalent to £120 in modern money. Rubens fulfilled the functions of court-painter till his death ; after the death of Isabella his pension was paid by the king (2). It is nowhere stated that work of any kind was demanded of him and we know that the pictures he painted to the order of the archdukes were paid for separately. Thus he received a sum of 1400 florins for the three pictures the Infanta ordered in and before 1621 for the choir of the Holy Sacrament in the church of St Gudule at Brussels. It is probable, as the text of the *Vita* gives us to understand, that the portraits of the Archdukes were the only thing he had to paint without special remuneration. His title of court-painter not only exempted him from all taxes, but also from the obligations imposed upon the members of the guild of St Luke ; he need never again hold the office of dean, his pupils need pay no entrance fees, and his widow no death dues.

(1) The inscription on the altar in St Michael's, as printed by Franciscus Sweertius in *Monnmenta Sepulcralia*, p. 144, runs as follows :

Matri Virgini  
hanc tabulam a se pictam,  
de suo ornatam,  
pio affectu ad opt. matris sepulcrum  
commune cum uxore Isabella Brant  
sua sibi die Petrus Paullus Rubens  
L. M. D.  
Ipso D. Michaelis Archangeli  
Anno M.DCX.

(2) *Bulletin-Rubens*, III, p. 102

The considerations that were alleged as the reasons for the extraordinary favour extended to Rubens prove the high opinion that was held at court, not only of his artistic genius but also of his abilities in general. Jean Richardot, president of the Council of State, who had a great affection for Philip Rubens, was living in Antwerp in 1609, where he had represented the Archdukes since the negotiations relative to the twelve years' truce. No doubt he had learned to know and appreciate the artist, and took charge of his interests with the prince.

THE NETHERLANDS AT THE DATE OF RUBENS'S RETURN. — Rubens, as we learn from a letter from Willem Verwilt to Jacobus De Bie, reached Antwerp before the 11<sup>th</sup> December, 1608 (1). For a time he resumed the common life with his brother in the family house. When Philip married Maria De Moy, on the 26<sup>th</sup> March, 1609, Peter Paul remained alone in the house in the Kloosterstraat, which was then called St Michielstraat, and was one of the most important in the town. Rubens was no longer a nobody in his native town, and the duke of Mantua's court-painter could not fail to be welcome in literary and artistic circles. He was less known in other society; but he soon acquired, both at Antwerp and elsewhere, a fame which no other artist has ever possessed among us.

He arrived at the right moment. His country, it is true, was passing through misfortunes, but the calamitous days of the preceding half-century had had happy consequences, at any rate for art. It was more than forty years since war had broken out between the king of Spain and his revolted subjects. In 1585, Antwerp, the last stronghold of the Reformation in the southern provinces, had fallen into the hands of Alessandro Farnese, and since that date our countries had returned under the yoke of Philip II. But the war had been carried on between Spain and the northern provinces. The most powerful monarchy of the Europe of that date could not succeed in reconquering the little angle of territory formed by the alluvial deposits of the Scheldt, the Meuse and the Rhine. In spite of the resources furnished by its possessions in Italy, Burgundy, Belgium and the New World, in spite of the experience of its veteran troops and the science of its generals, its forces, like its chances of success in this unequal strife, diminished daily. In the time of Philip II the decadence of the kingdom was already visible, and after his death it increased with deplorable rapidity. The Dutch provinces, on the other hand, were fighting with the courage and confidence of a young nation, determined to go forward for independence and liberty. They were fighting on their own ground for their very existence, and drawing from their firm determination and high courage the strength and initiative necessary to find in commerce and navigation the resources that were to enable them to support a struggle which for them must end in existence or non-existence.

That lasted till 1594. Then Philip II began to seek for other means than war to save what yet might be saved of the Netherlands. Alessandro Farnese, the great general, died in 1592. One of his officers, old Count Ernest of Mansfeld, had succeeded him temporarily. Two years later, the king replaced him by his nephew the Archduke Ernest of Austria, to whom he wished to give his daughter Isabella in marriage, with the sovereignty of the Netherlands. But the new sovereign died in 1595, before the plan could be carried out.

(1) *Bulletin-Rubens*, III. p. 165.

The king appointed in his place Ernest's brother Albert, Cardinal-Archbishop of Toledo and Viceroy of Portugal, for whose benefit the intended plan was finally realised. He was given Isabella in marriage, with the Netherlands as her dowry. Philip II died, before the execution of the project, on the 13<sup>th</sup> September, 1598. Two months later the marriage was celebrated by the ambassador at Ferrara, and in 1599 the new sovereigns, the Archdukes as they were thenceforth called, were solemnly enthroned in our provinces.



THE ARCHDUKE ALBERT OF AUSTRIA  
(Richard C. Jackson, Camberwell).

ALBERT AND ISABELLA. — They had become, at least in name, the independent rulers of a country, over which they were to exercise absolute authority. In reality, however, certain restrictions of some importance had been placed on their sovereignty in the contract by which the king ceded our provinces to them. Thus, should they be without children, the country was to return to Spain; if Isabella died before Albert, he was only to rule our provinces with the title of governor; if they had only daughters, the princess royal must marry the king of Spain or his presumptive successor. The Netherlands thus became a sort of fief of the crown of Spain, destined to return to the suzerain on the death of the vassals. Even during the Infanta's life-time, the autonomy of her states was not respected. By virtue of a secret convention, Spanish garrisons were to occupy the principal strongholds.

Spain neither would nor could finally alienate the finest flower of her crown. The

exigences of her policy and the desire to maintain her preponderating influence in Europe obliged her to keep in the North-West a foothold on which she could depend. In her struggle with France for supremacy and the possible dispute of her empire of the seas by England, she needed something more than the Iberian peninsula, isolated by seas and mountains, and could only find in her Italian possessions the resources necessary to play with success the *rôle* of the first power of the world. Throughout the reign of Albert and Isabella, Spain watched over and protected our provinces, which only enjoyed incomplete independence, and that on sufferance. The Archdukes, moreover, took up the reins of power in such difficult circumstances, and felt so little at home in our countries, that the limits set to their authority, so far from being a burden to them, appeared, on the contrary, like a relief.

Albert was a good and kindly man, with a sufficient initiation into politics when he arrived in this country, for he had governed Portugal for eleven years; he was versed in the art of war, and courageous on the field of battle. During the twenty-two years in which he was



associated in the government of our provinces, there was never a complaint raised against him. He was a great lover of the arts and especially of painting, following the example of many of the princes of the house of Burgundy. His collections, which formed a veritable museum, are well known by the reproductions of them made by Breughel. He gave the title of Court-painter to Otho Vænius, Breughel and Rubens. His castle of Tervueren contained two hundred valuable pictures, not to mention those that adorned his palace in Brussels and his castle of Mariemont. But his genius never flew high, and his qualities were modest and without brilliance.

Isabella was his superior. Her father loved her dearly: in his will he calls her the light of his eyes. For no other of his children would he have consented to detach the Netherlands from Spain; but attaching as he did so much importance to the possession of our provinces, he resigned himself to the separation in order to secure her the rank of a sovereign. She reigned over the country for a third of a century under the reservation mentioned above, and directed both politics and war with zeal and application. She had inherited from her father a severe and somewhat gloomy religious fervour, which was tempered in her case by feminine sweetness, and so did not degenerate into fanaticism and intolerance. In the second half of her reign, after her husband's death, she gave more display to her pietist tendencies, and went so far as to adopt the dress of the Franciscan nuns; she ended by resembling the mother-superior of a monastic order, directing her community with intelligence and care, and taking pleasure in enriching and adorning her churches and convents. Rubens said of her: « She is dowered with all the virtues that can be found in woman; long experience » has made her skilled in the government of peoples and shown her the falseness of the theories that new-comers bring us from Spain » (1). She differed from her brother Philip III and her nephew Philip IV in carrying on the government herself instead of abandoning the conduct of affairs to favourites. During the last years of her life she placed unbounded and thoroughly justified confidence in Rubens, and had recourse to his sagacity and devotion in the most difficult circumstances of foreign politics. To her he was not only the client of her patronage, but an authorized collaborator and counsellor.

When the artist returned to his native land, the military forces of the United Provinces



THE ARCHDUCHESS ISABELLA CLARA EUGENIA  
(Richard C. Jackson, Camberwell).

(1) Rubens to Jacques Dupuy, 20th July, 1628.

were commanded by Prince Maurice, the son of the national hero, William of Orange, and himself one of the ablest generals of his time. Albert was commanding in person the armies of the southern provinces, but the real general was the Genoese Marquis, Ambrosio Spinola. Spinola belonged to a family of merchants and bankers, but had found himself drawn by an irresistible vocation to the career of arms. He had placed at the service of Spain his immense fortune, which amounted, we are assured, to fourteen million ducats, and lost it entirely. At his own expense he recruited an army of eight thousand men, which he led into the Netherlands, and with which he took service under the banners of the Archdukes. They entrusted him with the chief command of their forces. In the first important encounter between Albert and Maurice, under the walls of Nieuwpoort, in 1600, before the arrival of Spinola, the Archduke's soldiers, the veteran and experienced Spaniards, were defeated, after a desperate battle, by the young troops of the Republic. In the following year Albert sat down before Ostend, which the Hollanders had seized. Not till three years later and with the help of the reinforcements brought by Spinola did he succeed in capturing the place, which was nothing but a heap of ruins.

The enemy were driven from Flanders, but the war continued in 1605 and 1606 on the banks of the Meuse and the Rhine, to the great injury of the country and with no great advantage to either party. These futile efforts had brought fatigue on both sides, and in 1607, at Albert's demand, an armistice was concluded, which opened the way for the negotiation of a treaty for peace. The *pourparlers* only came to an end in 1609. On the 9<sup>th</sup> April, the truce was concluded and proclaimed. Hostilities were to be suspended between the two countries for twelve years, and all was to remain *in statu quo*, as at the moment of the signing of the convention. Relations and commerce between the Netherlands of the north and south were to be free. The truce was respected, and, short though it was, the two countries tasted its fruits. The beginning of this period of pacification almost coincided with Rubens's return to Antwerp. Then there began an epoch of splendour for the arts such as our country had never known, during which the greatest of our painters found the opportunity of winning recognition for his talent both at home and abroad.

ANTWERP AT THE BEGINNING OF THE XVII CENTURY. — It was far from being the case that all the wounds produced by the long struggles were healed, and that Antwerp and our country saw the return of the prosperity they had enjoyed half a century before. The ravages caused in the towns and the country districts by the terrible wars of the preceding fifty years had depopulated and impoverished the Flemish provinces. Thousands of inhabitants, the living strength of their fatherland, the artisans of her prosperity in commerce, industry, science, and letters, were exiled, or had been banished for their faith, and had sought refuge in the provinces of the north. The population of Antwerp, which in 1585, before the siege, had numbered 90,000 inhabitants, had diminished by one half, and times were to grow worse and worse for the town and the country, the decadence of which was yet to increase. During the last years, the Dutch generals had waged an offensive rather than a defensive war; their soldiers had taken or menaced the frontier towns, their vessels had blocked the Scheldt below Antwerp, and during the negotiations for the truce, it had been forgotten to stipulate that the navigation of



GASPARD GEVARTIUS  
(Museum, Antwerp)



was accompanied by Pieter Maessene, the son of the famous poet William of Orange and nephew one of the oldest friends of his city. He was not hesitating to person the power of the common government, but the first contact with the commonwealth Antwerp showed a general aversion to a battle of gradually accumulating, and the more slowly they got on, the more they were in the way of doing so. The first attempt to capture it made the persons present, which amounted, for the month of January, to a great number of soldiers. At the last, however, he received an army of eight thousand men, which he did not think sufficient, and with which he took service from the banner of the Archdukes. They surprised him with the help of command of their forces in the last important encounter between Albert and his enemies under the walls of Nieuwpoort, in 1606, before the arrival of Spinola, the Archduke's soldiers, the veteran and experienced Spaniards, were defeated, after a desperate battle, by the young troops of the Republic. In the following year Albert sat down before Ostend, which the Hollanders had seized. Not till three years later and with the help of the reinforcements brought by Spinola did he succeed in capturing the place, which was nothing but a heap of ruins.

The country were taken from Flanders, but the war continued in 1605 and 1606 on the banks of the Rhine and the Rhine, to the great injury of the country and with no great advantage to either side. These to the effort had brought fatigue on both sides, and in 1607, at Albert's demand, a truce was concluded, which opened the way for the negotiation of a more definite peace. This was accomplished in the year 1609. On the 9th April, the truce was concluded, and the country, which had been in the possession of the Spaniards for the last forty years, was at last returned to the Republic. The truce was not without its advantages, and the country, which had been in the possession of the Spaniards for the last forty years, was at last returned to the Republic. The beginning of this period of peace was marked by Rubens's return to Antwerp. There, there began an epoch of splendour for the city, which had been in the possession of the Spaniards for the last forty years, and the country, which had been in the possession of the Spaniards for the last forty years, was at last returned to the Republic. The beginning of this period of peace was marked by Rubens's return to Antwerp. There, there began an epoch of splendour for the city, which had been in the possession of the Spaniards for the last forty years, and the country, which had been in the possession of the Spaniards for the last forty years, was at last returned to the Republic.

ANTWERP AT THE BEGINNING OF THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY. — It was the last time the case that all the wounds produced by the long struggle were healed, and that Antwerp and our country saw the return of the prosperity they had enjoyed half a century before. The ravages caused in the town and the country, which by the remote wars of the preceding fifty years had depopulated and impoverished the Flemish provinces. Thousands of inhabitants, the living strength of their fatherland, the witnesses of her prosperity in commerce, industry, science, and letters, were exiled, or had been banished for their faith, and had sought refuge in the provinces of the north. The population of Antwerp, which in 1585, before the siege, had numbered 80,000 inhabitants, was diminished by one half, and times were to grow worse and worse for the town and the country, the decadence of which was yet to increase. During the last years of the Thirty years' war, when an offensive rather than a defensive war, their soldiers had taken up residence in the country, their vessels had blocked the Scheldt below Antwerp, and during the negotiation for the peace it had been forgotten to stipulate that the restoration of







the Scheldt should be free to the southern Netherlands. The Scheldt remained closed, and the commerce of Antwerp was annihilated for two whole centuries.

Dudley Carleton, who was soon to be in relations with Rubens, spent a day or two in our town in September, 1616. In a letter written on the 15<sup>th</sup> of that month to his friend John Chamberlain, he draws a sad picture of the aspect presented by the city. « We came to » *Antwerp*, wch I must confesse exceedes any I ever saw any where else, for the bewtie and » uniformitie of buildings, heith and largenes of streetes, and strength and fairenes of the » rampars... But I must tell you the state of » this towne in a word, so as you take it » literally, magna civitas magna solitudo (a » great state, and a great desert) for in ye » whole time we spent there I could never » sett my eyes in the whole length of a » streete uppon 40 persons at once : I never » mett coach nor saw man on horseback : none » of ovr companie (though both were workie » days) saw one pennie worth of ware ether » in shops or in streetes bought or solde. » Two walking pedlers and one ballad-seller » will carrie as much on theyr backs at once as » was in that royall exchange ether above or » below... In many places grasse growes in the » streetes, yet (that wch is rare in such solita- » rines) the buildings are all kept in perfect » reparation. Their condition is much worse » (wch may seeme strange) since the truce » then it was before ; and the whole countrey » of Brabant was suitable to this towne ; splendida paupertas, faire and miserable. » (1) Golnitzius, who visited and described the town eight years later, after speaking of the animation that used formerly to reign on the Bourse and in the galleries above it, adds : « But of all that, » there remains only an immense solitude ; the stalls are covered with dust and the pictures » with cob-webs. Not a merchant nor a courtier more is to be met with. All has disappeared, » all has foundered in the deeps of civil war ».



THE DEATH OF SENECA (Pinakothek, Munich).

How was it that art could flourish in this half-depopulated country, in these pillaged towns? How was it that a master like Rubens could still celebrate his triumphs there? How is it that we are able to call such times propitious? The fact appears strange, but it is none the less true.

Though the country had suffered and was yet to suffer, the years that elapsed from 1609 to 1621 offered a happy contrast to those that had gone before ; there was peace, and the power of hoping for a better future ; there was room for thinking with more tranquillity of spirit of the works which bring forth prosperity, and the arts that embellish life. Though

(1) NOËL SAINSBURY : *Papers relating to Rubens*. p. 11.

Antwerp had lost much, enough of her ancient wealth was still left to enable her to afford luxuries. In 1599, when Albert and Isabella made their entry into the town, it was, as of old time, sumptuously decorated with triumphal arches and painting; the foreign nations which still had counting-houses in Antwerp, each erected one of these triumphal arches. In 1592, when the jewels, carpets and lace of the French crown had to be sold for the benefit of the League, the enemies of Henri IV chose Antwerp as the best market in which to realise the precious things. Natives and foreigners might still hope that the war, long as it had been, was but a period of crisis which must certainly come to an end some day; and after the arrival of the Archdukes confidence in a favourable issue was stronger still. The conclusion of the truce increased these hopes, past prosperity had been too great, and the population had too many good qualities, to allow despair of the future. And so, with a mixture of fear and hope, men were courageously preparing in 1609 for a new life.

There was another cause, also, which contributed to the efflorescence of art. During the late troubles, the Reformation had triumphed in the country of the Flemings, and the iconoclasts had destroyed all the works of art that decorated the churches; when the old order of things was re-established, the powers and brilliance of all were devoted to the Catholic religion, and it was assisted in every way; theological studies were followed with more zeal than before the Reformation, and a whole ecclesiastical literature came into being; here, as in other European countries, the reaction in favour of Rome was energetically manifested. No one thought of putting obstacles in the way of this religious ardour; on the contrary, everyone tried to distinguish himself by his attachment to the faith of his fathers. The churches and convents were opened again and established anew in all their lustre, and the work of building others was begun on all sides. On the 20<sup>th</sup> August, 1585, five days after Antwerp had fallen into the power of the Spaniards, the Roman clergy returned to the town; on the 27<sup>th</sup> the Recollets or Reformed Franciscans, the Dominicans and the Praemonstratensians made their entrance; the same year saw the return of the Capuchins, who inaugurated their new church in 1589; in 1591 the monks of Pieter Pot and the Beghards rebuilt theirs. And that state of things continued, especially after the conclusion of the truce. In 1614 the Jesuits laid the first stone of their church, and in the same year the Annunciades that of theirs, in the Winkelstraat; in the following year it was the turn of the Augustins, who had returned in 1608; in 1627 the Reformed Carmelites founded the monastery in the Grain-market; in 1630 the Cellite brothers set up in the street that bears their name; in 1634 the Carthusians in the Rochusstraat; in 1635 the Spanish sisters of St Teresa. During the reign of the Archdukes, ten new monastic orders and as many hospitals were established in the town. Old or new, the chapels and churches had need of pictures, and Rubens soon became the artist who was approached by preference for the decoration of the altars and great retables.

The Archdukes set the example. The court was sumptuous and regulated according to most punctilious Spanish etiquette. At a time when the lack of money had reached its height in the country, during the siege of Ostend, the expenses of the royal household amounted to two thousand gold crowns a day; its entertainments were brilliant, and its liberality to churches and convents unlimited. The great families, the municipal authorities and the well-to-do burghers followed their sovereigns' example; nothing was too precious where the adornment of temples

and altars was concerned. The church of the Antwerp Jesuits, which was finished in 1621, and decorated by Rubens's pictures, was completely encased in precious marbles; the façade was covered with sculptures; the tower was a master-piece, and the whole edifice was the most sumptuous that that powerful Order had ever possessed.

RUBENS AT ANTWERP. — On his arrival Rubens occupied the first rank among the painters of the city and of the country. Besides his masters, Otho Vænius and Adam van Noort, the ancient historical painters still living were Jan Snellinck, Frans the elder, Ambrosius, Frans the younger and Hieronymus Francken, Abraham Janssens, Hendrik van Balen and Martin Pepijn, all followers of the Italian style. Side by side with these history painters there existed a group of secondary masters who painted with minute care little pictures of rich and vivid colour, but more like painting on china. To this group belonged Hendrik van Balen, in his little panels, Jan Breughel de Velours, and Sebastian Vrancx. At the apparition of Rubens the old and cold school disappeared; the new painters came under the ascendancy of Rubens, whose return to Antwerp had quite the air of a triumphal entry into the empire of art. The young artists learned from him, the painters of excessive finish broadened their manner to bring it into harmony with his, he infused new and fertile life into the dried up veins of the school of Antwerp.

Among the painters he met here on his return, one group especially attracted him; that of the artists who had lived in Italy, and, on their return to Antwerp, had formed an association there under the name of the Romanists. Not painters only were admitted to it, but scholars also, and indeed, anyone who had paid a visit to Italy. In 1609, Jan Breughel was dean of the guild, and at the annual banquet, which took place on the 29<sup>th</sup> June, he pronounced a welcome to Signor Pietro-Paolo Rubens.

Rubens soon formed friendly relations, not only with his fellow-painters, but also with the most considerable members of the middle-class. His family, in spite of its misfortunes, always enjoyed high esteem in Antwerp. Jan Rubens had occupied an important position in the town council, and his son Philip could say without presumption at Peter Paul's wedding: — Yes, brother, our father sat in the same town hall as your father-in-law, and the place he occupied in the council was none of the meanest, whether he were explaining the enigmas of obscure laws, or giving his advice in eloquent words. Maria Pypelinckx was thought much of among her acquaintance, who belonged to the highest classes. In the declaration they made in 1589, to which we have already alluded, the aldermen Andreas van Breuseghem, Jonker Lazarus Haller and Jonker Gillis de Meere declare that they have always entertained friendly and familiar relations with her and her children. The aristocracy of intellect held Philip Rubens in high esteem, and his friends were not slow in becoming friends of his brother also and the first admirers of his talent. This we may affirm positively of Nicolaas Rockox, burgomaster of the town and chief of the Harquebusiers, whose nephew, Jan-Baptist Perez de Baron, had met Rubens in Italy; of Jan Woverius, Philip's fellow-student, Balthasar Moretus, Peter Paul's old school-fellow, Jan Brant, the learned alderman, Cornelis van der Geest, the enlightened patron of the arts, through whose agency Rubens was commissioned to paint the « Elevation of the Cross », and Frans Sweertius, who was at once a great merchant and a distinguished man of



letters. All these were among the most eminent of the patricians of Antwerp both by blood and attainments; Rubens was received into their circle and joined with them in daily intercourse.

This society represented pretty exactly the enlightened upper middle class of the time — the men of education, as we should say now-a-days. The mental condition of this class presented a certain originality. All these men had received a classical Latin education at school,



ISABELLA BRANT — Drawing (National Gallery, London).

and had been inoculated, together with the language, with a profound admiration for the great pagan republic; on the other hand, in practical life they had ever been taught respect for the Spanish monarchy and for the Catholic church of Rome. Justus Lipsius expounded Tacitus, and praised the Stoic Seneca to the skies; but he also wrote the history of the miracles of Our Lady of Montaigu and Our Lady of Hal, and dedicated his silver pen to the latter. Rubens resembled them and did as they did. In this world where life was double, where men lauded the virtues of the citizen in the past and of the monk in the present, he too was at once a Roman citizen and a Roman Catholic. He lived in an unhappy age and in a country that was being led to destruction; he could not but suffer on perceiving how sad and heavy was the atmosphere he breathed, but his eyes turned with regret towards the ideal world where men had the pride of heroes and women the beauty

of statues. There it was that he found the models for his human beings, with powerful muscles, opulent forms, and unshaken courage, surrounded with pomp and splendour, fighting furiously, rejoicing without limit, or suffering horribly. The executioners raising the Cross of Christ, the Saviour expiring, Decius, to save his country, plunging into the battle where he must fall, the Church advancing in triumph in her chariot drawn by eight white horses, all Olympus holding festival with Marie de Medici, the three kings adoring the Infant, Mary ascending into heaven, the martyrdom of saints, Silenus reeling in shameless drunkenness, the mothers defending their babes against Herod's assassins; all these are so many scions of an heroic race, born in the brain of a great artist full of sublime dreams and luminous visions.

RUBENS'S FIRST MARRIAGE. — Rubens was not slow in forming more intimate relations with Jan Brant, one of the notable men of Antwerp of whom we have just spoken. He was born at Antwerp on the 30<sup>th</sup> September, 1559, had learned the humanities in his native town,



RUBENS AND ISABELLA BRANT  
(Pinakothek, Munich)







Herrn Franz Hartmann



and then studied at Louvain, where he obtained the degree of master in letters, and started immediately on his legal course; that finished, he had visited the universities of Orleans and Bourges in France, and followed the university courses in Italy. About 1585 he returned home, and settled first of all at Brussels, where he practised for five years as an advocate. In 1590 he married, at Antwerp, Clara De Moy, whose sister afterwards became the wife of Philip Rubens; then he went to live in his native city, where for thirty-one years he occupied one of the four secretaryships of the town. He then resigned his office in favour of his son, Hendrik, and was nominated alderman; he died at the age of eighty on the 28<sup>th</sup> August, 1639. In 1635, when Rubens painted his portrait, he was 75; the picture is in the Pinakothek at Munich. Jan Brant was a distinguished representative of the Flemish patricians of the time; he cultivated literature as a relief from his official labours. Literature in those days meant Greek and Latin philology and the criticism of texts; the mother tongue and the other modern languages did not count. Brant's biography was written by his friend Valerius Andreas, who states that he was a thorough master of the principles of the two languages, and sees no need to take the trouble to say which. As an educated and self-respecting man, he published some political and critical notes (*Notæ politicæ et criticæ*) on Julius Cæsar; collected into a volume the praises of the Romans scattered through the works of Cicero, and wrote a critical essay on the works of Apuleius. As an original work, he published a dissertation on the duties of councillors truly worthy of the name, which draws its substance from the wisdom of the ancients and is written in a tongue imitated from theirs. Thus he deserved the name upon which his contemporaries most prided themselves, that of a good latinist.

Four children were born of Jan Brant's marriage: Isabella or Elizabeth, baptized on the 20<sup>th</sup> October, 1591; Hendrik, the 31<sup>st</sup> July, 1594; Jan, the 22<sup>nd</sup> August, 1596, and Clara, the 4<sup>th</sup> November, 1599. Rubens made the acquaintance of the eldest daughter soon after his return, fell in love with her, and won her hand. The engaged couple lived in the same street, not far from one another. Philip Rubens, who was already Isabella Brant's uncle, became also her brother-in-law. The marriage took place on the 8<sup>th</sup> October, 1609; on the same day Balthasar Moretus wrote to his brother Jan who was living temporarily at Cologne: Brant's daughter was married to-day to the painter, Peter Rubens (1). The nuptial benediction was given in



ISABELLA BRANT (Uffizi, Florence).

(1) Hodie nupta Brantii filia Petro Rubenio pictori. *Correspondance de Rubens*, II. p. 10.



the church of St Michael's abbey, which stood a few steps from the house of the newly-married pair. It was not a parish church, and the marriage had to be entered in the registers of St Andrew's church ; this was only done at the end of the year and with no indication of the date (1).

Rubens, according to the account his nephew Philip gives in the *Vita*, went to live with his young wife in his father-in-law's house. In the list of those invited to the funeral of Jan Moretus, which was drawn up in 1610, we find mentioned one immediately after the other :

M. Brandt, registrar and Peeter Rubbens, painter » in the St Michielsstraat. He lived there till the completion of the house he was having built on the Wapper.

History knows but little of Isabella Brant, but that little does her credit. It consists of a word of praise written by Rubens on the 15<sup>th</sup> July, 1626, in answer to the condolences sent him from Paris by Pierre Dupuy, on the occasion of his wife's death. « Indeed », he writes,

I have lost an excellent companion, who might, or rather must, be loved, and with reason, for she had none of the failings proper to her sex ; always good-humoured, she was exempt from all the weaknesses of woman ; she was all kindness, all amiability ; in her life she was loved for her virtues, in her death she is regretted by all . This funeral oration is short, but it describes her at length ; it would be difficult to say more good of a woman in fewer words. Rubens was later to have a new companion whom he loved with a more passionate love, and whose beauty he glorified in the eyes of the universe ; but with Isabella Brant he seems to have enjoyed a calmer domestic happiness ; his first love was as rational as it was deep.

There is nothing so charming, nothing indeed so touching, as the group in which he painted himself with his young wife ; every line in it speaks of mutual confidence, of pure and tranquil happiness in the scene represented in so simple and so sincere a manner (*Œuvre*, N<sup>o</sup> 1050). His wife, dressed in her richest clothes, perhaps in her wedding-dress, is sitting on a bench so low that her knees almost touch the ground. She wears a high peaked hat, the broad brim of which, lined with green, is raised and fastened to one side by a costly jewel ; the hat rests jauntily over her ear, in the fashion of the day. The rich lace of a small cap slips from beneath the hat, falls to her ear and hides a great part of her hair, which is reddish brown ; her pretty head is framed in a rich lace ruff. A black striped jacket, open over the breast, shows a blue satin bodice, embroidered in black and gold flowers, which comes down very low over her skirt. The skirt is violet and is drawn up from a yellow petticoat. Fine cuffs, turned back and folded over her sleeves, with a bracelet set with oval stones, complete the elegant costume. Her bride-groom is also in gala-dress ; he wears a high conical felt hat with a wide brim and decked with a rich ribbon garnished with precious stones, a large lace collar hanging over his shoulders, a close-fitting pourpoint of yellow shot with green, ornamented with black lace, wide breeches of black velvet richly worked, and orange-coloured stockings. His brown cloak lined with black lies across his knees.

The composition of the group is very pleasant. He is sitting cross-legged, with his left arm leaning on the back of the bench, of which only the square massive foot is visible, his left

(1) Sr Petrus-Pauwels Rubens, Joffm Isabella Brant Sollemnisation in Ecclesia D : Michaëlis (P. VISSCHERS : *Geschiedenis van St. Andries Kerk te Antwerpen*, I, p. 90).

hand rests on the hilt of his sword, and his right on his knees ; the upper part of his body bends towards his beloved. She is sitting much lower, her head leaning towards his and resting on his arm, while with a confiding and affectionate gesture she places her right hand on his, and her left, which lies along her body, holds her closed fan. She is eighteen, with limpid eyes radiant with happiness. Her beauty is not regular and classic : her large brown eyes and fine brows slant upwards a little, the lower part of her face is too small in proportion to her forehead, the corners of her mouth turn up too much, and the jaws are too prominent ; but she is charming none the less. He, evidently, is the lord and master. He is so handsome, with his long rather curly auburn hair, his thin fringe of beard, his long and slightly fairer moustache curled up with the air of a conqueror, and his large eyes that contemplate the future with serenity, that we might fancy his exterior alone had been enough to captivate his wife. He has the elegant attitude and the easy movement of a man of good address in all circumstances ; in her comes out the young girl of the middle class, who yesterday was still living under the eye of her mother, and to-day has become the companion of an artist, and what an artist ! And then, too, it is spring-time, the flowers open under their feet as in their hearts. They are sitting in the garden under a bower, and the honeysuckle, that friend of the house in old Flanders, surrounds them with its thick foliage and its countless flowers, a very feast of colour and perfume.

Conceived and executed as it is, full of harmony, sentiment and unstudied grace, this group is a true master-piece, and a worthy precursor of those that were to succeed it. It stands like an image of happiness at the door of the master's new existence, and the impression that it conveys was to be found in all his future creations, in which everything speaks of strength and joy, and interior satisfaction drawn from the consciousness of that joy and that strength. The colour is sober, rather dry and dark, and the outlines are sharp ; there is no reflexion nor effect of light ; only the white material of the little silk bodice worn by the bride stands out in full day. The flesh is firm with brownish lights on the hands, and the transparent shadow thrown by the hat-brims over the faces.

The picture belongs to the Pinakothek at Munich, where it came from the Gallery at Dusseldorf. Originally painted on canvas, it has been transferred to panel. There is a drawing in existence in red chalk, in which Rubens traced his own head to use as a model for his portrait (*Œuvre*. N<sup>o</sup> 1528) This beautiful drawing formed part of the Julianne sale in 1767, and of the Thibaudeau in 1857. It is not known where it is now, and our knowledge of it is confined to engravings.

Here we have the earliest portrait of Isabella Brant. Rubens afterwards painted her again several times, not so often, indeed, as he painted Helena Fourment, but with sufficient frequency to give interest to the comparison between the first and last portraits. The furthest, in point of time, from this first portrait, and also the most interesting is that at St Petersburg (*Œuvre*. N<sup>o</sup> 900), in which we see Isabella sitting in the inner court of her house, with the portico opening on the garden on her left. She is sensibly older, and has passed thirty ; her features are more accentuated, the tendency of her eyes and eyebrows to slant upwards is more noticeable, her chin is more pointed, the corners of the mouth are wider apart, her hair has turned a deeper brown, and as in other portraits in which Isabella appears bareheaded, it is drawn tightly back,

with the exception of a few little curls that break the line. In spite of the difference in age, the likeness between the two portraits is incontestable. For the last, Rubens had made a drawing in black and red chalks, which is now in the British Museum.

A second portrait, in the Uffizi Gallery at Florence (Catalogue No 197), shows Isabella Brant nearly full-face, the lines are fuller, her cheeks are no longer firm but hang towards her chin; her right hand lies on her breast and the left holds a small book bound in red with gold clasps, with the first finger between the leaves. She is wearing the same jewels as in the St Petersburg portrait, a double row of pearls round her neck, and a richly wrought chain



HEAD OF A ROMAN EMPEROR  
Drawing (Duke of Devonshire).

that hangs over her black jacket in three rows separated a long way from each other. A gold diadem studded with precious stones encircles her hair. Her face is instinct with kindness and good humour. This portrait was painted shortly before that at St Petersburg. The execution is highly finished, the lighting even and warm.

The duke of Norfolk's collection contains a replica of it. Waagen states that it is light in touch and extremely remarkable for the warmth and brilliance of its tone (*Œuvre*. No 899) (1).

There is a third portrait of Isabella Brant in the Royal Museum at The Hague; her hands are crossed over her waist, and her features differ very little, if at all, from those in the preceding portraits. Her costume is simple, a black silk dress cut square over the chest; the slashings in the large sleeves show white silk embroidered in gold; her throat is half covered with a gauze kerchief; in her hair is a gold jewel set with white pearls like those in her earrings.

This canvas is several years earlier and probably dates from 1620 (*Œuvre*. No 897). M. Edmond Huybrechts of Antwerp possessed a replica of this portrait, painted by Rubens himself. There is a copy in Sir Richard Wallace's collection, now the Wallace Collection in London.

There is no difference between all these portraits beyond what arises from age and attire. With the portrait in the royal collection at Windsor Castle (*Œuvre*. No 895) the case is different. Here we see Isabella Brant still a young woman; her hair is combed back off her forehead, but falls again over her temples and almost completely hides her ears; her fringe is studded with flowers and surrounded with a string of pearls. She wears a high collar of fine lace and a yellow dress with a short black cloak; round her neck is a simple row of pearls. Her attire and her jewels are different from those she wears in the other portraits. Her features also are not the same as in her later portraits; the angle of her eyes is still slightly upturned and her jaws more or less prominent, but these peculiarities are not so marked. The picture is that of a pretty woman bathed in sweet, full light that falls upon her frizzed auburn hair; the nose is longer and the forehead higher, and the fingers have all the delicacy that Vandyck gives to those in his pictures.

(1) WAAGEN : *Treasures of Art in Great Britain*. II, p. 86.





ISABELLA BRANT  
(Hermitage, St. Petersburg)





H. 100. Roeloffs van der A. v. 1610.





In the course of years Isabella Brant must have changed considerably, and not for the better. Rubens painted this portrait about 1614, *con amore*; later, when his wife's features had become more marked, he gave equal prominence to this characteristic detail. It cannot be admitted that the Windsor Castle portrait is not that of Isabella Brant; it came from the Lunden family, which was connected with the Rubenses, and has always borne the name it is now known by.

The Uffizi at Florence (Catalogue N<sup>o</sup> 180) has a second example of this portrait. It is wrongly called Helena Fourment. In this picture she is holding between her thumb and forefinger a string of pearls that falls from her neck over her breast, with so natural a gesture that we cannot doubt that Rubens used it in the original. If Isabella Brant is holding nothing between her thumb and forefinger in the Windsor Castle picture, there is probably a gap in the painting. There is a copy in the Museum at Nantes which agrees with the Florence picture; a second replica belongs to the Sanderson collection at Learmouth Terrace. The National Gallery, London, has a study for this portrait drawn by Rubens (*Œuvre*. N<sup>o</sup> 1499).

Rubens spent long years with his young wife in perfect conjugal felicity. Only one serious blow affected him during the first years; the loss of his best friend, his brother Philip, who died on the 28<sup>th</sup> August, 1611. He was buried in the church of St Michael's Abbey. Peter Paul painted the portrait of the deceased for his tomb, and Balthasar Moretus composed the epitaph. Unfortunately the portrait is lost; it was probably used as the model for that engraved in 1615 for his book, *Asterii Homiliae*. In his mention of Philip Rubens's death in his biography of his brother-in-law, Jan Brant says that Peter Paul was the sole survivor of seven children.



HEAD OF A ROMAN EMPEROR  
Drawing (Duke of Devonshire).

THE FIRST PICTURES PAINTED BY RUBENS AT ANTWERP. — THE DISPUTE OF THE HOLY SACRAMENT. — The first important commissions Rubens received in Antwerp were for the altars of the town. The earliest of all, in my opinion, is the « Dispute of the Holy Sacrament » in the church of the Dominicans, now St Paul's (*Œuvre*. N<sup>o</sup> 376). Bellori affirms that it was among the first works he painted on his return to Antwerp. On this point there can be no doubt, although no contemporary document gives the precise date. On the 24<sup>th</sup> July, 1616, when the administrators of the chapel of the holy and sweet Name of Jesus and of the Holy Sacrament in the church of the Dominicans in this town of Antwerp drew up an inventory of the furniture and ornaments belonging to the chapel, they mention « An artistic painting of the Reality of the Holy Sacrament, made by Mijneheer Peeter Paulo Rubbens. And below, on the base of the two sides of the altar, the figures of Moses and Aaron, made by the said Heer Peeter Paulo Rubbens ». In 1643, three years after Rubens's death, the work was engraved

under his name; up till the second half of the XVIII century all the guides and descriptions of the town assigned it to him; and as his it was taken to Paris in 1794. But in 1815, when the looted pictures had to be returned to Antwerp, one of the Belgian commissioners, the painter Odevaere, conceived some doubt of the authenticity of this curious Rubens, and attributed it either to him or to Sallaert (1). In the rest of the official documents relating to the restitution of the pictures, it continues to figure thus under a double name. On this account the name of Rubens disappears from the guides to the town published after 1815, and the picture is mentioned under the name of Sallaert. So it remained till our own days. The shutters of the *‘Elevation of the Cross’* have also been attributed to this same Sallaert, who was one of Rubens's pupils. Like the picture of the Holy Sacrament, they are painted in too dark a manner to allow connoisseurs to regard them as the master's work.

The picture, in fact, is of little value compared with those that were soon to follow. There is an obvious reminiscence of Raphael's *‘Disputa’*, though the general arrangement of the figures is the only thing that has been preserved. As with the Italian master, there is a monstrance on an altar in the background in the middle of the picture; on either side are grouped the theologians and fathers of the church, some sitting, others standing, and holding a disputation on the incomprehensible mystery. Above hover God the Father and the Holy Ghost, with three small angels on either side holding open books. The choir of Saints that appears in the upper part of the Raphael are wanting here; the group of doctors is more closely crowded, and thus we miss what gives the Italian master's picture so impressive a character, the convergence of the two long rows, one composed of the theologians and the other of celestial inhabitants, towards the Holy Sacrament, which glows on the distant heights as the central point of the composition. The controversialists do not show here the meditation, the consciousness of their sublime task, which are revealed by Raphael's figures: they are scholastic debaters arguing a difficult question. Moreover, there is little unity in the composition. In the foreground there are half a dozen colossal figures, and, quite inexplicably, a St Jerome, naked to the waist, by the side of two bishops in pontifical robes. In the background, a row of theologians surprise us by their extremely small stature, which is out of all proportion with the figures in the foreground. The execution is no whit more satisfactory: it is finished with anxious care, while the colour is dry and hard. In the distance are columns and a corner of blue sky on which small whitish clouds make a glaring contrast. The flesh tints are pale, the shadows brown, and the robes, even the bishop's cope on the left and the cardinal's cloak on the right, have not the rich colouring to which Rubens has accustomed us. The picture, in fine, is disconcerting. But there can be no doubt of its being a Rubens. Not to mention the documents which prove it, there is more than one detail that gives evidence to the same effect. In the broadly treated figures of the two prelates in the foreground we recognise the painter of the St Gregory on the retable of the Chiesa Nuova, and the St Eligius on one of the shutters of the *‘Elevation of the Cross’*. The attitude of the St Jerome recalls in the most striking manner that of the same saint in a picture in the Dresden Museum, which was probably painted in Italy.

(1) PIOT : *Tableaux enlevés en 1794*. p. 25.



There can only be one explanation of the singular appearance of this picture : Rubens must have had some of it painted by an assistant. He himself painted the grand, imposing and genuinely Rubenian figures in the foreground ; all those in the middle distance, the disproportionately small theologians, and, in the background, the hard blue of the sky and the anaemic and sickly little angels, were the work of a pupil. The intervention of another hand is more striking here than in the large number of later works in which he made use of help in the same way ; and that also is easily explained. Rubens had not yet formed any pupil whose painting could be taken for his own ; he had not yet even adopted the habit of laying down his sketches, tracing his design and retouching the pupil's work, until it became one with the master's and the line of demarcation was easily effaced. We have before us the first and least successful of the products of this collaboration.

The figures of Moses and Aaron, painted on the pedestal, have disappeared ; the marble altar that now stands there was erected, as an inscription above the picture attests, in 1656, and it was probably on that occasion that the two biblical characters were removed.

It is worth noticing that a mutual and enduring sympathy continued to exist between the painter and the religious Order which commissioned him for his first work. Eight years later, indeed, he painted a new picture for their church ; soon afterwards he did the retable for the high altar. He maintained friendly relations with one of the monks, Father Ophovius, later bishop of Bois-le-Duc, and tradition states that he took him as his confessor. It is true that Rubens painted no picture for the third altar in the Dominican church ; but in conjunction with Jan Breughel, Hendrik van Balen, Cooymans and other amateurs of art, he bought for 1800 florins a very remarkable work by Michael Angelo da Caravaggio, representing « Our Lady giving the Rosary to St Dominic », which they presented to the altar of the Holy Rosary. It remained there till 1786, when it was presented to the Emperor Joseph by the Dominicans, taken to Vienna and replaced by a copy by de Quertemont, which is still in the same spot (1).

THE ADORATION OF THE KINGS OF 1609. — At the same time as the chapter of an Antwerp church gave Rubens his first commission, he received another from the chief magistrate, which was the only one he was called upon to fulfil for the municipal administration of the town. In 1608, when the negotiations relative to the truce were to be continued at Antwerp, the burgomasters and aldermen thought of having one of the rooms in the town hall decorated, so as to be worthy of use for the reception of the representatives of the powers. For this purpose they chose a vast room on the first floor, then called the chamber of the States, and now used for the celebration of marriages. There they built a chimney-piece, which is still in existence, and is a master-piece of its kind. It is supported by the Roman woman and warrior which are to be seen serving as caryatids in many earlier buildings ; here their mighty limbs and ample muscles prove that a more virile art had already won adherents a year after Rubens, who was to assure its final triumph, had returned to Antwerp. Over this chimney-piece they placed a picture by Abraham Janssens, representing the god Scaldis and the Maid of Antwerp, which is now in the town Museum, and is still more obviously of the school of Rubens. From

(1) ALPH. GOOVAERTS : *Notice historique sur un tableau de Michel Angelo da Caravaggio*. *Journal des Beaux-Arts* 1873, p. 111.

Jan Breughel they bought a bronze Christ, the work of John of Bologna ; along the wall of the room, above gilded leather, under the ceiling, they hung thirty-four portraits of dukes of Brabant by Antonius de Sueca. Rubens was commissioned to paint a large picture to decorate the wall opposite the chimney-piece. Nicolaas Rockox was then chief burgomaster ; afterwards Rubens's friend and faithful patron, he probably made his acquaintance at this time, and no doubt wished to give him an immediate proof of his favour. Moreover, Jan Brant, the painter's father-in-law,



THE ADORATION OF THE KINGS (Madrid Museum).

and Philip, his brother, were among the number of the highest officers of the town, and out of consideration for them people would show themselves disposed to benefit the new comer.

Strangely enough, to decorate a place where nothing but scenes of civil life were ever enacted, Rubens chose the « Adoration of the Kings », a subject which he was to paint so often again (*Œuvre*. No 157). He found in it material for a picture of great variety, and an opportunity for the display of regal pomp. The kings from the different countries of the east, their trains and servants, their horses and beasts of burden, and the contrast between their splendour and the humble surroundings of the Child they came to worship, all attracted him powerfully, and supplied him with the subject of more than one master-piece.

The earliest in date is the one he painted for the chamber of the States. He must have completed it in 1609, for the accounts of the town for that year mention the payment of a sum of 78 pounds Artois to David Remeus for having painted and gilded two large frames for two pictures in the chamber of the States, one representing Scaldis, the other the Three

Kings. But the painter was not paid till the following year. On the 29<sup>th</sup> April, 1610, the treasurers received an order to pay Rubens a thousand florins on account, and on the 4<sup>th</sup> August, they were ordered to pay 800 florins more, to complete the sum agreed upon. Sixteen days later the town paid Abraham Lissau 82 florins and 18 1 2 stuyvers, for a silver cup, 26 oz. and 15 esterlins, at 3 florins 2 stuyvers the oz., delivered by him to the town and presented by our Lords to Peter Rubens, for services rendered by him to the town (1). There is no doubt that the service rendered to the town by Rubens was the painting of the picture of the Magi. The magistrates, indeed, proved very good to the artist who had lately returned to Antwerp. But it is to be regretted that they seem to have made more account of the man than of his work.

Three years after the picture had become their property, on the 28<sup>th</sup> August, 1612, the town was honoured by a visit from don Rodrigo Calderon, count of Oliva, envoy extraordinary from the king of Spain to the Archdukes. Don Rodrigo had been born at Antwerp, and during his stay in Brussels, he wished to revisit his native town. The magistrates received him with great honour, and profiting by the occasion to obtain one of the privileges from which they expected some advantage to the town, then in full decadence, they wanted to dispose of him favourably. With this intent they gave him Rubens's picture, the choicest and most beautiful present it was in their power to offer him, as they told him in sending it. The count was charmed with the precious present and took it to Spain. When he was involved in the fall of his friend and patron the duke of Lerma, the new favourite, Olivarez, had him accused, in 1621, of assassination and condemned to death. Philip IV bought the picture, which is now in the Madrid Museum. When Rubens saw it again in Spain in 1628 he retouched it and added a strip of considerable size to one side. In that state we know it.

The Virgin, slim and elegant, is sitting to the extreme left of the composition. The infant Jesus sits before her on a large vase covered with straw, two cushions, linen and a blanket. One of the kings, who wears a purple robe over which is draped an ample scarlet cloak embroidered with golden flowers, is kneeling before the divine child and offering him a jar full of gold pieces, into which the little Jesus is eagerly plunging his fingers. A page holds the skirt of the king's cloak in one hand and a torch in the other. His blue and white satin garments are no less brilliant than his master's. A knight in full armour is leaning over the new-born child to lose nothing of the scene. The Moorish king stands a little back. He wears a white turban surmounted with a white plume, a robe covered with jewels and a cloak of brilliant blue. He holds the chain of a small censer carried by a negro boy. Further to the right and nearly in the middle of the composition stands the third Wise man, a bald old man with a grey beard, enveloped in a red cloak. A page by his side holds a gold casket. The right is occupied by the train of the kings, which consists of two servants naked to the waist, one of whom carries a sack, the other a box. Further on are three horses, three camels and a mule, with six men mounted on or holding the beasts. Among them are three servants with brown skins and bare chests, and two men in brilliant garments, one of whom is a page with a blue tunic and red hose, and the other a knight who is easily recognised as Rubens. Two

(1) F. JOS. VAN DEN BRANDEN: *Op. cit.*, p. 490.



angels hover in the air. The scene is enacted at night and lit by half a dozen torches. In the dark sky the stars glitter.

We have said that the picture was retouched and enlarged. Pacheco, a historian of Spanish art and a contemporary of Rubens, confirms the fact that he retouched his work during his second visit to Spain, and Cruzada Villaamil states the same thing, adding that he enlarged it considerably (1). It is difficult to say what the retouchings consist in; it is probable that he refreshed the colour that had become dull. The added portion is easily recognised. A strip of over three feet in width has been joined to the principal canvas by means of visible stitches; the painting of this part is sweeter, more velvety, and not at all in harmony with that of the rest of the picture. The added figures are the knight, to whom Rubens has given his own features, the page attending on him, and the two servants.

Taking the picture as it is now, we find everything that gives brilliance to a painting lavished upon it: kings, imposing from their noble air and rich costume, slaves and servants remarkable for their athletic forms, children with sweet faces, pleasing the eye with the brilliance of their attire, horses, always so decorative, and camels that attract attention by the strangeness of their shape. Rubens has enhanced it all by the brilliance of his colour; he has carried to the extreme the tones of his draperies, purple and scarlet, white and blue, he has scattered gold and jewels over the garments, filled every hand with gold, made satin gleam and velvet shine with soft light, and given warm and transparent tones to the brown skin of the backs. That was much, but it was not enough. He added the flare of flambeaux and torches alternating with the light of the sun; for though the scene is a night-scene there is nothing nocturnal in it. In the foreground the clear tints of the flesh and clothes reflect the ruddy light of the torches. We find a superabundance of rich colours lavished without measure, as if floods of luminous pearls and new minted gold had been poured over the canvas; a harmony formed of the most extreme and brightest tones.

The richness and brilliance of this picture border on exuberance. The train of the kings forms a thronged and imposing group that rises obliquely from left to right, from the Wise man on his knees at the bottom to the camels and Rubens on horseback at the opposite end. There are twenty-four figures in it, without counting the angels, and seven beasts of burden besides. The only scheme of composition is the monotonous line that rises towards the right, the only design is the display of quantities of colour and riches. On comparing this composition with the *Adorations of the kings* which Rubens painted later, we are struck by the greater unity and the happier arrangement he introduced into the group, which, instead of being crowded together, is distributed over the canvas with an easy movement and a fine arrangement, while the characters also are placed more rationally according to the importance of the parts they play. In the master's later works the kings take, as they should, the first place, and the different characters are distributed in a varied but always reasonable manner; but in the present work the place of honour is occupied by the two colossal porters who display in the foreground their naked torsos and powerful muscles, an evident reminiscence of the nude and athletic bodies to which Michael Angelo gave such learned attitudes. This not very happy

(1) PACHECO: *Arte de la Pintura*. Madrid, 1866, I. p. 132. — CRUZADA VILLAAMIL: *Rubens diplomático Español*, p. 144.

arrangement, and the display of formidable muscular systems, are not the only features that recall our painter's Italian years. A certain hardness of colouring, the heavy shadows and sombre hue of the background, which we find also in the « Transfiguration » and the « Elevation of the Cross », are evidence that this picture belongs to his first period. Among the figures also we meet some old acquaintances again : in the Wise man kneeling before Mary we recognise the curly head and the robust limbs of Pilate, whom Rubens has here draped in the ample cloak of the St Gregory of the Chiesa Nuova ; the second mage with his white skin, bald head and long beard, is a near relative of the same saint ; in one of the servants, nude to the waist, who is raising himself to receive a burden, we recognise one of the men in the « Baptism of Christ », who is borrowed from Michael Angelo ; in the naked slave bending under the weight of a coffer, we meet once more the giant with the bald head raising the Cross in the « Elevation of the Cross » painted for Santa-Croce in Gerusalemme. ] Rubens had motifs and models which he liked to use in the works of each period. Thus we shall soon see the same naked giant again in the « Elevation of the Cross » painted for the church of St Walburga ; and the porch which here shelters the Holy Family will reappear on one of the shutters of the « Descent from the Cross », representing the visit of Mary to Elizabeth.

THE ELEVATION OF THE CROSS. - The second church of Antwerp for which Rubens executed a retable was that of St Walburga. Standing within the walls of the old castle it rose on the site of the most ancient church of Antwerp, and had originally been known as the Church of the Bourg. Hagiology relates that the Anglo-Saxon virgin Walburga, having fled from England, lived for many years in the crypt of the church of the Bourg, where she died in 776. A century later she was canonised, and before 1182 she had already succeeded SS. Peter and Paul as patroness of the church. Originally the building was of small extent ; in the course of centuries it was enlarged at various times and became one of the most important churches in the city. The tower was built about 1400 ; in 1479 the church was erected into a parish church ; the northern nave was built in 1501, and the southern in 1506 ; the choir was not finished till 1573. Remembering the period of agitation which followed, we shall not be surprised that the choir remained without an altar till the early years of the following century.

There was a man in Antwerp at that time who, without being an artist himself, was a great amateur of art. His name was Cornelis van der Geest ; he was a wealthy merchant and held the post of dean of the Mercers' Corporation. He lived not far from the church of the Bourg, in the Mattenstraat, next to the Reuzenhuis. To that house the Archdukes Albert and Isabella came on the 23<sup>rd</sup> August, 1615, to be present at a joust that was held on the Scheldt, and on the same occasion they paid a visit to van der Geest's gallery. There they saw a Madonna holding two cherries in her hand, by Quentin Matsys. The duke was so charmed with this picture that he spared no efforts to become its possessor, but without success. Van der Geest was not only a benefactor to his parish church, but his care extended to other churches also. In 1617 and 1619, the brotherhood « of the holy and sweet Name of Jesus and of the Holy Sacrament in the church of the Dominicans » paid him 200 florins for the facing of their chapel in marble and alabaster. He seems to have devoted a special admiration to Quentin Matsys, which



does great honour to his taste. In 1617 when they removed the funereal monuments from the small cemetery of Notre-Dame, the architect of the town had the great artist's grave-stone taken to van der Geest's. He kept it many years in his gallery, and on the 17<sup>th</sup> December, 1629, when he believed the centenary of Quentin Matsys's death had arrived, he asked and obtained



*Cliché. Braun, Clément & Co.*

THE ELEVATION OF THE CROSS Drawing (Louvre, Paris).

the chief magistrate's permission to have the stone set up at the foot of the tower, above the painter's tomb (1). Van der Geest was almost the only man in those days to make any attempt to perpetuate the artist's memory by a monument. He died on the 10<sup>th</sup> March, 1638, and was buried in the choir of the church of St Walburga. Vandyck painted his portrait, a master-piece, now in the National Gallery; it was engraved by Paul Pontius under the title of *Cornelius van der Geest Artis pictoriæ Amator*, (lover of painting). It shows a head full of delicacy and wisdom; the hair is sparse; the piercing eyes have the oblique and interrogative glance of the man of

(1) F. JOS. VAN DEN BRANDEN: *Op cit.*, p. 653.

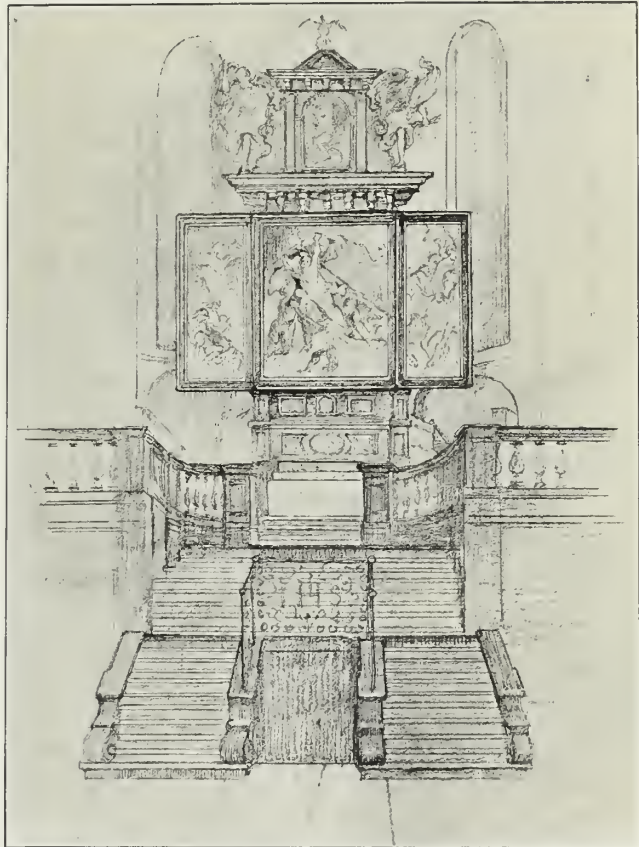


business. His pale, dark face is radiant with a brightness which is far the most splendid effect of light that Vandyck ever introduced into his portraits.

Cornelis van der Geest always remained one of Rubens's particular friends. When he confirmed a master's declaration relating to his pupil Willem Panneels on the 1<sup>st</sup> June, 1630, he is mentioned in the notarial act drawn up on that occasion as a notable inhabitant of the town, a merchant of great honesty and

a great amateur of antiquities, who both had and still maintained daily the most intimate relations with Rubens. Rubens dedicated to him the engraving made in 1638 by Jan Witdoeck after the triptych of the *Elevation of the Cross* or rather after the sketch for that picture. He did so in terms that glow with the highest esteem and the most lively affection for the friend of whom death had just robbed him.

« To Heer Cornelis van der Geest, the dedication runs, to the best of men and the oldest of his friends, to him in whom from his youth up he found a patron, and who all his life was an admirer of painting, is dedicated this souvenir of eternal friendship, which he had intended to present to him in his life time, and which is engraved after the picture in the church of St Walburga, of which he was the first to form the idea and the most zealous promoter. »



THE HIGH ALTAR OF ST WALBURGA'S CHURCH WITH THE ELEVATION OF THE CROSS BY RUBENS - Drawn by P. Verhaert after an old picture.

Rubens's eulogy was deserved, and the accounts of St Walburga's, which are no longer in our possession but were copied in the last century, prove that art is indebted to van der Geest for the existence of the *Elevation of the Cross*. We read there that on the 17<sup>th</sup> May, 1610, the vicar and the churchwardens made a collection in the parish for the funds needed to erect the high altar and complete the retable to adorn it. Some days afterwards the admiral's men were required to lend their services to stretch the covering lent by the captain, which was to protect the choir while Rubens painted the altar-piece. That proves that the master did either the whole or a part of his work on the actual site it was to occupy. We know also that he finished other retables in position over the altar, notably that of the *Assumption of Our Lady* » in the Antwerp Cathedral. In the first half of June the churchwardens, the vicar and Cornelis van der Geest met in the hall of the hostelry of the Klein Zeeland, where they concluded with the painter the contract for his work, and confirmed their agreement by payments amounting to

nine florins, ten stuyvers. On the 17<sup>th</sup> of the same month Rubens received 1000 florins on account of the 2600 for which he had undertaken to paint the retable of the high altar. On the 12<sup>th</sup> August, 1611, he received another 500. Between the 1<sup>st</sup> October, 1611 and the 1<sup>st</sup> October, 1613, he received two sums of 250 florins and one of 600 in full. In October, 1627, the church paid Jan Baptist Bruno 24 florins to clean the altar-piece over the high altar before Rubens retouched it, as he had promised, and as, in fact, he did.

The position in which the « Erection of the Cross » was to be admired for nearly two centuries was extremely lofty. The street leading from the Steen to the Vierschaar ran underneath the arch that supported it. The entrance to the crypt opened between the two wings of the stair. Rubens, therefore, found himself obliged to contrive his picture so that it might be looked at from far off and from below. For his subject he chose the « Elevation of the Cross », (*Œuvre*. Nos 275-285). He began by drawing a sketch of the general view of the composition, which showed Christ raised on the Cross, while his mother and St John watched the spectacle, and the Roman soldiers stood on the other side (*Œuvre*. No 1435). In this first idea, which belongs to the Louvre, the cross cuts the panel from left to right. Six men are striving to raise it. Next comes a painted sketch, now the property of Captain Holford of Dorchester House, London, and engraved by Witdoeck in 1638. It gives the whole general view of the composition, and only differs from the full picture in small details. In a second sketch, which was sold for a very high price in London, at Christie's in 1901, the three panels are found in the same frame, but separated. That was the way in which Rubens treated his subject in the great altar-piece. He found himself compelled to divide his picture into three parts, and the narrowness of the shutters obliged him to contract the lateral groups in a regrettable way, and prevented him from giving them any close connection with the principal part, the « Elevation of the Cross » proper. On the backs of the shutters he painted the patrons of the church : St Eligius and St Walburga on the left, St Catherine and St Amandus on the right. Under the triptych he placed three predellas : « The body of St Catherine borne away by Angels », « The miracle of St Walburga », and a « Christ on the Cross ». Above the great picture and separated from it by a row of consoles, was a niche, in which was a painting of God the Father; on either side of the niche stood an angel with floating drapery; the contours of these figures were carved; and above the niche a pelican in gilt wood was perched on a crowning. The predellas, the God the Father, and the Angels were all, like the triptych, the work of Rubens.

The God the Father was not a merely decorative subject; it was to him that the Christ stretched on the Cross was raising his eyes in supplication, and thus he filled an effective part in the drama. The altar is no longer in existence, and Rubens's paintings have not been preserved complete. The only trace that has survived of the original composition is a view of the church of St Walburga with the choir and high altar, as they were from 1610 to 1733; this view is the subject of a picture in one of the rooms attached to the church of St Paul. In 1733, the church found it necessary to have a new altar built, and without hesitation mutilated the creations of Rubens. It asked and obtained a faculty to sell the three small pictures placed under the central panel. Things did not stop there; the three figures that surmounted the retable were turned into cash by being sold to the Bourse in 1737. A painter-sculptor of the day, Willem Kerriekx, who built the new altar, had surmounted it with an arcaded structure

and covered the bottom of this pediment with his own painting. The predellas were bought by private persons, and in later times we find them figuring in various sales. The *Angels bearing away the body of St Catherine* was sold again in 1898 with the Foucart collection at Valenciennes; we meet the *Miracle of St Walburga* for the last time in 1840 in the Schamp d'Aveschoot sale at Ghent; the *God the Father*, which appeared in the crowning of the triptych, was bought in 1881 by Baron A. Duchastel at the sale of Baron Vinck de Westwezel; the Christ and the two angels of the predellas have disappeared without leaving any traces. In 1797 the church of St Walburga was turned by the French government into a customs warehouse, and in 1817 it was sold to be pulled down.

In 1794 the commissioners of the French Republic had the triptych sent to Paris. In 1815 it was returned to the king of the Netherlands, who presented it to the cathedral, where it still remains in the left part of the transept. Before placing it there they had it cleaned by the painter van Regemorter; but in 1847 it was decided that a more complete restoration was necessary; the commission was given to M. Etienne Le Roy, who finished it in 1854. If the picture has not precisely recovered its pristine brilliance, it is at least in a condition which no longer allows us to suspect that it was ever so seriously damaged as the commission of appraisal declared in its report of 1849.

The division to which Rubens subjected his original composition almost isolates the principal panel of it, which forms a complete whole by itself, and contains, besides, the essential part of the scene. A group of nine men are uniting their efforts to erect the cross, to which Christ is nailed; the task is half accomplished, and the heavy mass cuts the panel obliquely from the lower right hand corner to the upper left. In the foreground at the foot of the cross crouches the man with the curly hair whom we have already seen elsewhere as Pilate; in build as in movement he is the most excessive of all; his right leg is bent back beneath itself in such a way that the contracted toes are the only part touching the ground; his left leg is half bent so that his foot lies flat; with his right hand he leans against the cross, and raises his strongly muscled left arm half way up the stem which he is pulling towards him. Above him we find the giant with the nude torso and bald head of the *Adoration of the Magi*; he stands on the toes of one foot and rests the other on a projecting rock while he pushes up the cross with his chest and hands. On the right, an executioner's assistant is pulling stubbornly at a rope attached to the arms of the instrument of torture. Besides these three principal workers, there occur, in the lower part, an old man bent to the ground who grasps the cross in his arms, and a soldier in armour and a coat of mail who leans his back against the cross and struggles to lift it up; above is an old man wearing a turban, and a knight in a cuirass, in whom we recognise Rubens, resting one knee on the projecting rock; right in the upper part we meet once more the man with the nude torso and raised arms whom we have seen already in the first *Elevation of the Cross* made for the church of Santa Croce at Rome; opposite him stands an executioner, with his head covered by a cap, who is grasping the arm of the cross in one hand. All these men are doing their utmost, pushing, heaving, pulling, uniting all their strength in a single effort to raise the enormous cross with the weight of Christ upon it. The Saviour is aloft in the midst of them; his calm and sweetness contrast with their roughness, and the immobility of his outstretched body with their twisted and contracted limbs. His look is raised



above the earth with an unfathomable and tranquil expression of melancholy and silent pleading; the posture of his uplifted arms seems to invoke the succour of his Father, while his face shows submission to the inevitable destiny. The whole picture is unfolded against a wall of rock crowned with green boughs which stretch twisting towards the right and stand out against a blue sky streaked with filmy clouds.

The colour is of little moment: the yellow and blue drapery of the men at work at the foot of the cross, the red robe of the man in the white turban, a gleam of light on the cuirass



THE PROPHET EZEKIEL  
Drawing after Michael Angelo (Louvre, Paris).

of the man who resembles Rubens, a little green verdure on the rock, a corner of blue sky, and on the left a large dog with curly brown and white hair. The great effect is produced by the play of light and shade. The light falls strongly on the shoulders of the man with the curly hair, thence sends warm brownish reflections and illumines in more greyish light the executioner pulling at the rope. It takes on brown and bronze tones in playing over the giant with the bald head; finally it inundates in full tones the phantom form of the executioner on the left. The body of Christ is bathed in pale radiance with brownish shadows. But the whole scene is, as it were, impregnated with a sweet glow which penetrates everything, clear and warm on the right, and becoming thicker towards the left, but remaining transparent throughout.

Rubens set to work with the enthusiasm of

a veritable inspiration; he felt himself fortunate in having the opportunity of showing what he was and what he could do, and he created a work which is the first in date and one of the most eminent of his master-pieces. Up till then, his creations of athletic figures might be considered as a fancy he took pleasure in, but which often led him to produce men too powerfully built for the tasks he imposed upon them. Here the vigorous muscles are adapted to a very heavy toil; in imagining the action, he created also beings capable of accomplishing it. In the whole of sacred history there is no subject to be found that demands an equal display of physical strength; in the domain of art there are no men that work as these work. The greatest of the interpreters and glorifiers of physical strength reached in this picture the highest summit of his art. He has not only depicted a moment of historical importance, he has sung in imperishable numbers the supreme hymn of vigorous action. The executioners who labour and struggle on this canvas may be what they please, strangely assorted, improbable in their striking diversity; for us they are men displaying the intensest effort of the most prodigious muscular power.

He takes a visible pleasure in dividing the work between his characters and varying the expression of their violent efforts. Each of them taken separately is remarkable. The executioner,



Centre panel (Cathedral, Antwerp)  
THE ERECTION OF THE CROSS

Along the walls were set tables laden with food and drink, and the position of his individual staff seemed to be determined by the requirements of the occasion. The appearance of the scene was one of a banquet, and the guests were seated at the tables, and the tables were laden with food and drink.

The guests of the feast were seated at the tables, and the tables were laden with food and drink. The appearance of the scene was one of a banquet, and the guests were seated at the tables, and the tables were laden with food and drink.



THE ERECTION OF THE CROSS

Centre panel (Cathedral, Antwerp)

The scene is a dramatic representation of the erection of the cross. The figures are shown in a state of intense physical effort, with some figures pulling on ropes and others supporting the structure. The composition is dynamic, with strong contrasts of light and shadow, emphasizing the physicality of the scene. The figures are dressed in period clothing, and the setting is an interior space with architectural details visible in the background.

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### THE ERECTION OF THE CROSS Centre panel (Cathedral, Antwerp)





Christ Mocked by the Priests



doubled under himself like a spring, at the foot of the cross, has seized it with an arm like the trunk of a tree and is about to heave it up with an irresistible effort ; strange and terrifying, like a prodigious apparition from some other world, is the bald man with the nude torso and the projecting muscles who stands in the middle of the picture, propping the crushing weight on his chest, like a rock, and legs that might be taken for columns. While he and the others are pushing from below, the man hauling at the rope is pulling from above ; his hands grasp the rope with a grip of iron, and he throws himself back, with his muscles swollen and stretched in an effort that nothing can resist. The rest are merely assistants to these Titans ; they allow the principal actors to appear in all their importance. The group as a whole forms a mighty frame for the Christ and gives the composition the most perfect unity that could possibly be imagined. The toilers are so rough as to be scarcely human, and resemble living machines rather than thinking beings, but they are united by their efforts to a common end ; every one of their gestures, every turn of their bodies and limbs, is in harmony with all the other movements. They are hate leagued against love. The striking contrast of the resignation of the martyr with the rage of his executioners emphasizes still more strongly the cruelty of these men and gives their purely material efforts the character of an atrocious crime.

The Christ in itself is a master-piece ; he may appear, and may even be, too heavily made ; but the excessive forms of those about him demand that the principal figure should be powerfully built. His head is the finest ever painted by Rubens, not to say the finest ever painted by anyone ; every fibre of it complains, prays, and hopes, breathes anguish and confidence at once, and expresses the prayer of the God-Man to his Father which is in heaven. As a transition between the superhuman and the inhuman which here are face to face, Rubens has given his own features to the knight in armour ; he is toiling at the same task as the other executioners, but his heart is not in the work : his thoughts are with the martyr, whom he is looking at with compassion and whose sufferings affect him.

There is so much rhythm in the movement and harmony in the tone that we are tempted to believe that the artist conceived his whole work at a single moment, that he saw it as in a flash that threw open to him the world of sublime visions, and threw it on the canvas in an afflatus of creative inspiration. We know it was not so, that the gestation of the work was long and the alterations many before it reached its final form. The first version made for the



THE PROPHET JEREMIAH  
Drawing after Michael Angelo (Louvre, Paris).



church of Santa Croce, the drawing, and the two sketches, show how thoroughly he studied and refined it. We have seen too how he made use of more than one figure taken from his previous works. He even borrowed the main idea from one of his predecessors. In the lateral hall of the Scuola San Rocco at Venice, there is an enormous picture, representing Calvary, by Tintoretto. The Christ is already hanging on the tree of shame, but the executioners are still at work erecting the cross of one of the thieves. The action that is accessory in the work of the Italian master has become with Rubens the principal subject of his triptych. But his interpretation is as much superior to the Venetian's as his play of light and shade is to that of his Italian contemporaries. In Tintoretto's picture three men are working at the foot of the cross, which is immoderately high and almost upright, a fourth pulls at a rope and two others support the arms; carpenters' tools lie here and there on the ground. For here we have carpenters at work: they wear workmen's clothes and do their work with the calm and method of complete knowledge, as befits craftsmen. Rubens has made his people violent in movement, massed in a close group about the Christ, animated with a single passion which urges them to finish their work of execution with a single effort and without taking breath: the artisans have become the gigantic heroes of a drama. The head of Christ shows a striking resemblance to the well-known head of the *Ecce Homo*, or Christ crowned with thorns, so often painted by Guido Reni, the first idea of which Rubens may perhaps have seen at Rome; but he has robbed it of the sickly sentimentality which injured its dramatic expression.

He borrowed several figures from the « Elevation of the Cross » which he had painted for the church of Santa Croce in Gerusalemme at Rome. The sort of phantom who stands raising his arms to erect the cross, and the executioner nude to the waist who is pushing it up on the left are taken almost unchanged from the previous work, in which also a rope is used to erect the cross and the body of Christ cuts the picture diagonally. But in the earlier work the grouping is confused. The head of Christ hangs down and his feet are swinging by the side of the upright of the cross; there is nothing dramatic in the figure. The picture of 1610 is infinitely superior to that of 1602; one is a master-piece, the other the trial stroke of a prentice hand.

Rubens never painted this subject again: for him it was done with, exhausted. He had painted physical effort and brute passion in their highest and lowest. To attempt to picture them again under another form, would inevitably have been to picture them under a weaker form. The artists of succeeding generations were of his opinion on that point; they never attempted so rash an enterprise. Vandyck, who risked it on a day that he should have marked with a black stone, produced a caricature, which would have been enough by itself to discourage any new attempts.

The shutters are less interesting. On the left a woman of opulent mould clasps an infant to her naked breast and throws herself back in terror at the scene enacted on Golgotha; by her side stands an old woman like a spectre, who has often been taken for a corpse risen from the tomb, but was only intended by Rubens as a contrast to her blooming neighbour; further on are two beautiful young women seized with profound and grievous pity. Above, against the rock, stand Mary and John plunged in silent grief. Taken by themselves, these figures surprise us by their incoherence and the exuberance of their forms. They represent, in fact, in the work of Rubens, the excess of romance to which he was inclined in his early years, and

several traces of it may be found still recurring in the subsidiary figures in the central panel of the « Elevation of the Cross ». But regarded as personifications of the horror and dismay in which the death of the God-Man plunged his followers, they exhibit the most intense and varied expression of those sentiments. This is the only occasion on which the artist allowed himself to be enticed into following certain Italian masters, and especially Tintoretto, in their tendency to push impetuosity of movement to exaggeration. All his life Rubens showed boldness in the painting of action; but after 1610 his love of nature and truth prevented him from transgressing the limits of moderation.

On the right shutter are the two thieves, one stretched upon the cross and being nailed to it while the other is being led up by the guards. Further on, mounted Roman officers are presiding over the execution. These decorative figures are the earliest in date of the Roman warriors whom Rubens brought back to life in his pictures. In the lower part of the left shutter there is abundance of colour and light, but in the group of the thieves in the right shutter a tone of ash-grey prevails more than in any other part of the composition. The horse of the principal Roman officer is a superb dapple-grey of massive build, the first of the giant steeds created by the great animal painter.

The figures on the outside of the shutters are truly worthy of Rubens, noble, majestic, and imposing. On the left is St Eligius, one of the patrons of St Walburga's church, and St Walburga herself; on the right St Amandus, one of the first apostles of the faith, and St Catherine. These four saints were held in great honour in the parish. St Eligius is draped in an immense cloak, with a gold hem embroidered in green flowers; he holds a cross in his hand and reads attentively in a book; by his side stands St Walburga in a nun's habit and also holding an abbatial cross in her hand. St Catherine wears a white robe and white cloak with gold flowers, one hand rests on a sword and the other holds a martyr's palm; St Amandus stands by her holding the cross and draped in a scarlet robe, the brilliant tones of which are softened by the half-light. The figures of St Eligius and St Catherine are handled with a breadth that reveals the great decorative artist; St Walburga has a touching expression of piety and meditation; St Catherine, with her eyes to heaven, is one of the figures in which Rubens has symbolised ecstasy. It is an exact reproduction of the St Domitilla in the Chiesa Nuova. The reverse of the shutters is painted in grisaille without bright colour, except for the scarlet robe of St Amandus and the red lining of the cope of St Eligius. Rubens made a sketch in grisaille of the shutters, which is now in the Dulwich College collection.

It has been asked whether Rubens repainted the « Elevation of the Cross » in 1627, when, in fulfilment of his promise, he retouched his work. It is clear that, when he promised in 1610 to retouch the picture in due time, he proposed merely to restore their pristine freshness to any parts that might have grown dull in drying, and there is no reason to suppose that he did anything else in 1627. The whole execution is strikingly unified and entirely in the manner of his pictures of that date, a little dry in touch and rather grey-brown in tone. The triptych is all the work of Rubens's own hand, though here again it has been claimed that Sallaert collaborated with him. It is one of the last and greatest of the works of his first manner and his Italian period. But to that period and that manner belong several other pictures yet, of which we must speak before entering on the second part of his artistic career.

BIBLICAL SUBJECTS. — A picture which has an intimate connection with the « Elevation of the Cross » is the « Christ on the Cross » in the Antwerp Museum (*Œuvre*. No 287). The cross rises against a slate-coloured sky, on which the eclipse of the sun throws a ruddy spot on the left. Christ's head leans towards his left shoulder, and his eyes are raised to heaven with



CHRIST ON THE CROSS (Antwerp Museum).

an expression very like that of the Christ of the « Elevation of the Cross ». The livid lips of the mouth are half open, and death has spread its leaden tints over the features. The flesh is warm and yellowish in tone, with blue hollows and very marked shadows. Rubens painted the Christ and entrusted to a pupil the painting of the background, which represents a view of Jerusalem. The workmanship, as well as the striking resemblance of the figure to the principal figure in the triptych of St Walburga's, prove the picture to belong to the same period. Near the bottom, on the stem of the cross we may note the letters N.R. in a monogram. They are the initials of Nicolaas Rockox, burgomaster of Antwerp, and Rubens's friend. As the picture was originally in the church of the Recollets, to which Rockox was a great benefactor and to which he presented two other pictures by his favourite artist, we may suppose without fear of error that he ordered this picture in the early period of their relations.

The « Christ » of the Antwerp Museum is life-size. The same figure, painted in the same manner but of smaller dimensions, is in the collection of the late Sir Richard Wallace, now the Wallace Collection at Hertford House, London (*Œuvre*. No 293).

The picture dates from the same epoch, and came from the collection of Mme. Wellens-Geelhand of Antwerp, which was sold in 1810. Lord Hertford bought it in 1862 at the Baillie sale.

We know also that Rubens painted another picture for Rockox representing « Samson betrayed by Delilah » (*Œuvre*. No 115). It was engraved by Jacobus Matham, the only one of Rubens's creations which he reproduced. The picture is not in existence, but in the engraving we find the same manner and even the very figures which we first became acquainted with in the « Judith and Holofernes » engraved by Cornelis Galle: the male figure has the same colossal build and the same prominent muscles, the heroine has the same powerful shoulders,





THE BATTLE OF THE AMAZONS  
(Pinakothek, Munich)

**GOLDEN CHARITTY.** — A young child (possibly a daughter of the artist) is depicted in the lower part of the picture, standing on a cross and holding a cross in her hands. The child is looking up at the figure of Christ on the cross. The figure of Christ is shown in a very simple, almost abstract manner, with a long, flowing robe and a halo. The background is a plain, light color.



FIG. 1. GOLDEN CHARITY (Pinakothek, Munich)

The figure of Christ is the same as the figure of Christ in the picture of the same name from the collection of Mme. Welens-Gedland in Brussels, which was sold in 1819. Lord Hertford bought it in 1862 at the *Roth* sale.

We know also that Rubens painted another picture for Rockox representing — as stated by Denard — (*Clavier* N. 115) it was engraved by Jacobus Matham, the only one of his works which he reproduced. The picture is not in existence but in the engraving we find the same margin and even the very figures which we find before acquainted with in the *Paradise and Holoferns* — engraved by Cornelis Galle — the same figure of the same child and the same ground and figures, the figures of the same personages.

#### THE BATTLE OF THE AMAZONS (Pinakothek, Munich)









and finally the same old woman figures in both scenes. It is evidently, therefore, one of Rubens's earliest works. The engraver dedicated his plate to the most noble and serene Heer Nicolaas Rockox, knight, divers times burgomaster of Antwerp, amateur of the Fine Arts, who had had it engraved after the work of Rubens which was admired in his house.

Finally we have still to mention under the head of the biblical subjects of this period the *Hagar driven by Sarah from the tents of Abraham* (*Œuvre*. No 105), which was painted about 1612 and now belongs to the Hermitage Museum at St Petersburg. It is a small picture, sombre in tone and heavy in form, in the manner of the *Elevation of the Cross*; but it presents in a striking manner the situation of the unhappy mother, loved and honoured but the day before, and now banished with her son into the desert where death will overtake her. A replica of this little picture was painted some years later by Rubens for Sir Dudley Carleton.

THE BATTLE OF THE AMAZONS. — With the *Elevation of the Cross* we may compare the *Battle of the Amazons* (*Œuvre*. No 570) which belongs to the same period. According to Bullart (1), this picture also was painted for Cornelis van der Geest, one of Rubens's admirers. The subject of the *Battle of the Amazons* is an enormous one, and in ordinary circumstances would have demanded a canvas of great dimensions. If the panel it is painted on is relatively small (3 ft. 10 in. high by 5 ft. 3 in. wide) it was because the picture was destined for a private gallery in the house of a burgess, and van der Geest must have ordered it of the artist at the same time as Rubens undertook to paint the *Elevation of the Cross*.

In the order of time the *Battle of the Amazons* is Rubens's second master-piece. The composition has more breadth than in the first. The squadron of heroines, led by their queen Thalestris, has been put to flight by the soldiers of king Theseus, who come up with them at the moment when they reach the river Thermidon. A furious fight is raging on the single arch of the bridge over the river. Most of the male and female warriors are mounted and moving in the same direction. Theseus and Thalestris meet in the middle of the bridge. The queen's horse is biting the nose of her enemy's; both animals rear and caracole in savage fury. The Amazon's arm is uplifted to strike her adversary's horse; Theseus is not defending himself, but taking part in a fight close by his side between a Greek and an Amazon with a standard. He has seized the banner and is drawing it towards him so that the woman clinging to it is thrown backwards and dragged from her horse. Under the feet of the horses lies a dead man with the blood spouting in jets from a wound across his neck. On both sides of this central group, which is crowded together, shocked and shaken by the action, the combatants swarm, swept on at a frenzied gallop. On the left the Greeks hurl themselves into the fight, with banners unfurled, waving their lances, or sword in hand, thirsting for blood; on the right the Amazons flee. One of them has fallen from her horse, and the animal continues its flight, mad with terror; others are stopped by their assailants. Such are the contents of the upper part of the picture.

In the foreground of the lower part a still more terrible drama is being enacted. The bridge is too narrow to give passage to the compact crowd that presses on to it; several Amazons, with Greeks in pursuit, are attempting to escape along the steep banks of the river.

(1) *Académie des Sciences*, Paris, 1682, II, p. 472.

The enemy pursues them along this perilous path. The combat continues in a headlong chase; already there are two naked corpses stretched on the bank, another is floating in the stream, and two of the combatants are still swimming in the water. Through the opening of the arch may be seen Amazons trying to escape by swimming or in boats, or clinging to the arch of the bridge. In the background is a burning town, and the red light of the conflagration illumines this scene of desolation and destruction. On the left, the picture is no less terrible: three Amazons are hurled from above into the river, and their horses, falling with them, roll on their bodies; the water flies high, thrown up by this dreadful fall.

With his mighty hand Rubens has accumulated here all forms of horror and hurled the warriors and their heavy steeds into the action with irresistible power. This is no battle where orderly drawn up and scientifically led troops stand face to face; it is no hand to hand fight in which courage and strength are the assurance of victory; it is a man-hunt which rushes bounding on with the impetuosity of an avalanche, interrupted only in the middle of the bridge by the struggle round the banner; in the other parts the heroes run or fall without thought of danger, and the nature of the battle-field aids them in their work of destruction. Rubens has shown skill in the arrangement of all the elements of his work that might contribute to the grand effect of the whole. But in grouping his characters and giving them movement, his inspiration mastered him: in obedience once more to the poetic instinct that guided him in creating the *« Elevation of the Cross »*, he has drawn and painted an appalling but superb vision, the most horrible of battles: not a fight, but a slaughter, not a defeat but the destruction of an army, of a race of heroines.

The new drama differs from the *« Elevation of the Cross »* in showing not only a display of strength, but also, and above all, heroic courage and action; for here man is striving not against material difficulties but against man, against his enemy; and here a stronger and more varied passion communicates to everything a more feverish life and more impetuous movement. Rubens never painted a more violent scene of action; at no time and in no place has any art produced a picture to equal this in dramatic power. He was not, it is true, the creator of the root idea — the fight between two opposing armies on a bridge. Raphael in the *« Battle of Constantine »* shows the warriors of Maxentius passing in their flight over the bridge over the Tiber, or escaping in boats; Titian, in his *« Battle of Cadore »* painted opposing forces in pursuit over a bridge, at the end of which rages the battle; there was nothing, up to the episode of the fight for the standard, which Lionardo da Vinci had not given him in his *« Battle of Anghiari »*, or of Casina. Rubens knew these pictures. He had seen Raphael's fresco in the Vatican; after an engraving or a copy of Titian's picture, which was destroyed in 1577 by the burning of the Doges' palace, he had made a drawing which appeared in various sales, and was last knocked down in 1878 in the Ellinckhuysen sale to Heer Koster (*Œuvre*. N<sup>o</sup> 1394); equally, after a copy of Lionardo da Vinci's group, he had made a drawing which was engraved by Edelinck in one of his most masterly plates (*Œuvre*. N<sup>o</sup> 1395). But the first two of these masters, from whom he had only borrowed the general idea, he leaves far behind; his characters like his groups are completely different from theirs; in Lionardo da Vinci's superb group we find only a single figure that recalls those of Rubens. With none of his predecessors is the action so concentrated; none have so happily combined



the parts with an eye to the general effect ; none, above all, can be compared with him for the impetuosity of movement and warlike fury of the combatants. The numerous reminiscences of Italian works which strike us in the *Battle of the Amazons* prove that it was painted at the time when the recollection of these works was still fresh in Rubens's mind, that is to say, during the first three years after his return to Antwerp. The painting confirms this opinion. The dominant tone is a deep brown, from which the luminous parts stand out with ruddy lights. But the opulent colourist is already heralded. The outlines of the horses are still very sharp, but the play of light and shade on their coats is well marked. The white horse falling on his back in the river on to the Amazon riding him is softly touched ; the rest are painted with a light brush which has spread the colour in thin layers. The play of colour on the green waves shot with dark and light tints, the effects of light on the water under the bridge and the reflections on the clouds of the conflagration raging in the background, the mixture of shadow and of light with flashes of gold which cross them, give the whole tonality a rich appearance.

Among the first-rate merits which distinguish the *Battle of the Amazons*, we must not forget the masterly fashion in which the horses are treated. Rubens loved and understood them. For the first time, he gives them here an important place in one of his compositions, and the attempt is a master stroke. His coursers gallop, trot, rear, and prance in every possible way ; they leap or fall back on their hoofs, their backs, their heads, their sides ; it would be impossible to imagine movements more varied or more extraordinary, or impressions more diverse than those which the brush has here given to these animals, whether they are attacking in fury, fleeing, suffering or perishing miserably. Rubens was to bring them on the scene once again ; but never in so masterly a fashion nor with such happy audacity.

The *Battle of the Amazons* as we have said, was painted for Cornelis van der Geest. In the second half of the seventeenth century it belonged to the duc de Richelieu, and Roger de Piles speaks of it in the part of his *Conversations sur la peinture* devoted to the description of certain pictures by Rubens in the duke's collection. On that occasion he applied to Philip Rubens to know when the picture was painted. Philip Rubens replied that it dated from about 1615. Our own opinion is that it is at least three years older. It is incontestably earlier than the *Descent from the Cross*, and that would bring it to between 1610 and 1612. About 1690 it was bought by the Count-Palatine John William. Tradition makes it the first picture acquired by that princely lover of art for his celebrated Dusseldorf Gallery, which afterwards became the most precious gem of that at Munich. In 1845, the picture was restored by the Director Langer. Many copies were formerly made of it. We know of early ones in the collection of the Duke of Alva at Madrid, in the Gotha Museum, and elsewhere. Rubens rightly valued this work highly ; he had it engraved by Lucas Vorsterman in six plates, the largest engraving he ever had made after any of his works. According to Bellori, the engraving was made after a drawing by Antony Vandyck, corrected by a few pen-strokes by Rubens, on the heads, says Mariette, who had seen the actual drawing. In the collection of the duke of Orleans, sold in 1749, there was a sketch by Rubens, slightly different in composition from the final painting. The sketch acquired by the British Museum from the Malcolm collection is wrongly attributed to Rubens, and has no connection with his master-piece.

LAST PICTURES IN RUBENS'S FIRST MANNER. — To the same order as the *Battle of the Amazons* belong two pictures of moderate size again representing violent action, the *Defeat of Sennacherib* (*Œuvre*, No 124) and the *Conversion of St Paul* (*Œuvre*, No 477 (2)). These also are now in the Munich Pinakothek.

In the *Defeat of Sennacherib* the Assyrian king is riding across the country with the



THE DEFEAT OF SENNACHERIB (Pinakothek, Munich).

leaders of his army, when suddenly, in the midst of a ray of light that flashes from the depths of thick darkness, four angels, armed with thunder bolts, appear in the sky. The whole army takes to flight, the king's horse rears, and Sennacherib is obliged to cling to his mane; his warriors roll in the dust around him, while the horses gallop in terror-stricken flight. On the ground the dead and wounded lie in heaps.

It is a scene of unparalleled confusion and disorder. The anguish of the horsemen and the panic of the horses are represented in the boldest and most striking manner. Sennacherib's horse rears on his hind legs to an almost perpendicular position, beating the air madly with his fore feet, while his mane and tail toss wildly. Another horse in flight throws his hind feet so high that he looks as if he must turn a somersault head-foremost; another snorts and neighs with nostrils dilated in mortal terror; the riders, in fear for themselves, give no thought to



quieting their steeds. This composition with its violent movement evidently springs from the same dramatic source as the « Battle of the Amazons », though it is not equal to it. The painting, too, is drier, the effects of light are lacking and the passages of shadow in the sky are disagreeably hard.

As a pendant to this picture Rubens painted the « Conversion of St Paul », which is of equal dimensions and similar in subject. Three years later, probably in 1618, he painted the same scene again in a large picture that differs markedly from the first. It was long in the collection of Sir Philip Miles, at Bristol; at the sale of which in London, on the 13<sup>th</sup> May, 1899, it was bought by M. Ch. Siedelmayer of Paris, and lately entered the Berlin Museum (*Œuvre*. N<sup>o</sup> 477). In the large picture, Christ appears in the clouds, and a panic like that we have described seizes on Saul, his travelling-companions and their horses. Saul's horse has fallen to his knees and thrown his rider over his head to the ground; another is rearing and trying to turn round and flee; here again a third horse kicks high with his hind legs in mad flight. The movements are almost identical with those in the « Defeat of Sennacherib », but executed in different directions. It is an excellent painting; the rider in white thrown from his horse is admirable, and a beautiful warm light spreads over all. Rubens was here assisted by Vandyck who began the work that his master finished, and painted the horses.



ST SEBASTIAN (Berlin Museum).

From the same period as the « Elevation of the Cross » dates the « St Sebastian » in the Berlin Museum. The saint is bound to a tree, and raises his eyes to heaven with that expression of ecstasy which Rubens so often gave to his characters at that time. His head is that of Rubens in his youth. His naked body, of firm flesh and perfect shape, is bathed in warm light which throws deep shadows touched with brown tones; the modelling of the flesh is indicated by bluish tints, a peculiarity which occurs several times in the pictures of this period.

There are two more pictures which must be referred to the first years that followed. « The Disciples at Emmaus » (*Œuvre*. N<sup>o</sup> 342) hangs over the altar in the private chapel of the duke of Alva at Madrid (1). The Saviour sits breaking the bread; one of the young disciples recognises him and rises in surprise; the other opens his arms; an old woman is pouring out wine; a young servant brings a dish. The expression of ecstasy on the face of Christ and the

(1) H. HYMANS: *Das Museum*. Vol. III. — *Id.* *Gazette des Beaux-Arts*. 1891, II, p. 162.



well-known features of the model for the old woman instantly recall the manner of 1609 and 1610; the date of the engraving made by Swanenburg after this picture in 1611 leaves no doubt of the period at which it was painted. It aroused great admiration on its appearance. In the verses he improvised for the engraving and dedicated to the possessor of the work, Pieter Scriverius says :— If anyone casts doubt on the art of Apelles, o De Man, we will send him to Delphi to consult the oracle. But there is no doubt that Christ rose from the dead, for he broke bread at Emmaus under the eyes of the astonished spectators. We marvel at the event painted by this Apelles . The first phrase shows that the picture was painted for a certain Mannius (De Man) an amateur of art at Delft. In 1643 it was engraved once more by Van Sompelen, which proves that it was then still in Holland.

A second engraving by Swanenburg is dated by him 1612, the year in which he died. It represents Lot made drunk by his daughters ( *Œuvre*. N<sup>o</sup> 104). The father sits between the two women; he is looking amorously at the one holding the cup and drawing her towards him. She defends herself, but feebly, and throws herself back. The other is pouring wine into the cup. In the background is Sodom in flames. The picture is lost. The heavy build of the characters, their firm and full limbs, as they appear in the engraving, prove the work to belong to an early period. Rubens painted the same subject about the same time with modifications, but not without coarseness, in a work that formed part of the collection of the duke of Marlborough, and now belongs to Baron Hirsch at Paris ( *Œuvre*. N<sup>o</sup> 103).

Another lost picture is only known to us from an engraving by Andreas Stock. It represents the Sacrifice of Abraham ( *Œuvre*. N<sup>o</sup> 107). Isaac is on his knees with his hands bound behind his back; his father has already raised the knife, when an angel descends from heaven to stop him. A ram is caught in a thicket by his horns. On the 29<sup>th</sup> October, 1614, the demand addressed by Balthasar Flessiers to the States General of Holland, that he might engrave this picture, was refused.

On the 11<sup>th</sup> May, 1611, Rubens writes to Jacobus De Bie touching one of the pictures of this period ( *Œuvre*. N<sup>o</sup> 632): « I hope you will not take it ill if I take advantage of an opportunity that has offered, to sell my picture of Juno and Argus for a proper price, for I hope that my brush will in time produce something that will satisfy you better ». Jacobus De Bie was an engraver, who reproduced the collection of the prince de Croy and was charged by him with the negotiation of many affairs with artists, among whom was Rubens. The busy agent must have approached the painter with a view to buying the picture in question for the rich collection of his patron, and Rubens politely declined.

The picture has been for some time in England, whither, it is said, it was taken from Genoa in 1823 by Mr Buchanan. Since then it belonged in succession to Mr Gent, Mr Yates and the Earl of Dudley. From the hands of the last it passed to the Cologne Museum. Argus is stretched on the ground, headless, with his chest turned towards the spectator, his arms clasped behind his neck, one leg bent and the other raised. Juno stands in the centre of the picture; she has just stepped down from her gilded chariot; she wears an ample red robe; a rich cloak, embroidered with large gold flowers on a dark ground and trimmed with ermine, is thrown over her right shoulder; a female attendant, whose head covered with curls of pale gold is all that is visible, carries the train. In her hand Juno holds Argus's eyes, which are like

precious stones, and is letting three of them fall. Argus's head, enveloped in white linen, lies on the knees of one of the goddess's attendants, a blonde in a blue robe, whose veil of the same colour is raised at the back. Before her stands a peacock with his tail lowered, and another by his side with his tail spread. Two winged boys appear to be about to seize the peacocks' feathers; another stands behind. The foreground is a deep brown, the background black, the sky grey with luminous clouds over which hangs a rainbow. The corpse of Argus is remarkable, vividly recalling the muscular giants of the *Elevation of the Cross*, with more pronounced effects of light. In the same way, Juno's attendants recall the *St Catherine* of the same triptych, and the goddess's drapery is of the same stuff as the cloak of *St Eligius*. The action is still broken up, the colours are little varied, the shadows are dark brown, and the effect is sought chiefly in the play of the light. There can be no doubt that this picture belongs to the same period as the *Elevation of the Cross*. The peacocks were painted by a collaborator, as were the children also, or at least the greater part of them.

Three other pictures are mentioned in the letters and verses addressed to Rubens about this time by Dominicus Baudius, professor of law and history at Leyden, with whom Rubens's brother had formed an acquaintance through their common taste for making Latin verses. On the 4<sup>th</sup> October, 1611, Baudius sent Rubens his condolences on the death of Philip, and asked him at the same time for his friendship. On the 11<sup>th</sup> April, 1612, he sent him a piece of verse, begging him to make him a present of a picture. In this poem he mentions the three works of the master we allude to: a *Prometheus bound on Caucasus*, probably now in the Oldenbourg Museum (*Œuvre*. No 671); a *Ganymede carried off by the Eagle of Jupiter* (*Œuvre*. No 612), and a *Venus and Adonis*. We do not know precisely where the two last are. Baudius did not get the picture he asked for, and his death, which occurred on the 22<sup>nd</sup> August, 1613, soon brought his relations with the painter to a close.

Several other works may be referred with certainty to this period. Among them is the *Rape of Proserpine* (*Œuvre*. No 672), which was destroyed in the fire that broke out on the 6<sup>th</sup> February, 1861, at Blenheim Palace, the seat of the duke of Marlborough, and which Waagen informs us was a master-piece carefully painted by Rubens's own hand during the first years that followed his return from Italy. The sketch for this picture is in the Schrakner collection at Strasburg. Another is the *Triumph of Saul* (*Œuvre*. No 117) belonging to Mr Chauncey Hare Townshend, which Waagen refers to the same period as the *Battle of the Amazons*. We may further mention a mythological picture that belonged to the duke of Westminster, and was last sold to M. Bourgeois. It represents *Ixion deceived by Juno* (*Œuvre*. No 631). The goddess, who has taken the form of a cloud, looks on at the scene of love. The work is distinguished by the massive forms, which degenerate into heaviness. Finally there is the picture representing *Venus, Ceres and Bacchus* (*Œuvre*. No 699) belonging to the Cassel Museum, probably painted by a pupil of Rubens after a work of the master's Italian period.

Rubens's manner of this period is marked in these inferior works by its defective side. A picture of far greater merit is the *Christ on the lap of his mother*, who is pulling a thorn from his forehead (*Œuvre*. No 319), in the Imperial Museum at Vienna. This picture is of the same period; so also is the *Christ descending into Hell* (*Œuvre de Rubens*, V, 328) which we

only know by the sketch, which was recently still in the possession of Dr Schubart of Munich and was later included in his sale.

In the first four years that elapsed after his return from Italy, Rubens became entirely himself, and created several works of the highest order. His manner acquired also a remarkable unity and equality. During his residence beyond the Alps, hesitation and uncertainty might be noticed in his painting; sometimes the colour is brilliant but broken, sometimes it is spread in large, continuous, dull slabs; his shadows are always brown and heavy, but in some pictures they are dry, while in others they are impregnated with light; very often his figures are colossal and sometimes they do not much exceed the ordinary proportions of the human body. After his return, he maintains a greater similarity with himself: his grouping becomes masterly, his tone is brown, and his shadows heavy, with pale chestnut lights; in modelling flesh he employs tones of bluish grey; his colour is grave, intense and dark. The period is one of youthful and effervescent vigour; the colossal dominates; the opaque tones and the warm light give the painting an overdone look; on his first works reality stamps itself more and more, ennobled by the heroic soul of the artist. But, even in the latest creations of this period, romantic imagination leaves visible traces. We shall see that in 1612 his manner underwent a radical change, and although he varied and oscillated in a remarkable way during the first period of his artistic career, the works of later years are so manifestly different from those of the years that preceded, that we have reached the turning-point at which we may mark the end of his first manner.



HERMAETHENA — Drawing (British Museum, London).





CHILDREN AT PLAY — After an engraving by Lucas Vorsterman the younger (Whitehall, London)

## CHAPTER IV

### FROM 1612 TO 1616. — FIRST PICTURES IN RUBENS'S SECOND MANNER

RUBENS'S HOUSE — HIS CHILDREN — TRANSITION FROM THE FIRST TO THE SECOND MANNER — THE DESCENT FROM THE CROSS — ALTAR-PIECES AND MONUMENTAL PAINTINGS — PICTURES DATED FROM 1613 AND 1614 — RELIGIOUS SUBJECTS — MYTHOLOGICAL SUBJECTS — SCENES OF RUSTIC LIFE — THE LAST JUDGMENT — PORTRAITS — DRAWINGS FOR BOOK-ILLUSTRATIONS — RUBENS'S PUPILS AND COLLABORATORS — HIS CELEBRITY.



NICOLAS RUBENS  
Drawing (Albertina, Vienna).

**R**UBENS'S HOUSE. On the 4<sup>th</sup> January, 1611, Rubens bought a house and grounds of large size used as a laundry, standing adjacent to each other on the Wapper. This name was given to a part of the canal which followed the ancient moat of the fortifications and brought the water from Herenthals canal to the town breweries. It led from the Blue Tower to the Meir. On its bank, near the Meir stood a bascule (Wapper) used by the brewers for drawing water. Two streets ran along the canal, the Wapperstraat on the west, and the Vaartstraat on the east. The deed of sale of 1611 shows that the two streets and the canal, from the Hopland to the Meir, were designated under the collective name of Op den Wapper. Near the Meir the canal was vaulted over, and there were houses built over it; near the Hopland it was bordered by a wall in the Wapperstraat and by houses in

the Vaartstraat. Coming down the last street towards the Meir, on the right, near the Hopland there were four small houses, then a laundry and a large house; towards the Meir stood several more houses. These were the laundry and the large house near the middle of the Vaartstraat (now Rubensstraat) which Rubens bought to set up his domicile there. The deed of sale describes the two properties thus: 'A house having a large gate, court, gallery, kitchen,

chambers, land and appurtenances, and also a laundry adjoining thereto on the south (1). At the back the laundry adjoined the garden of the Guild of the Harquebusiers, which stretched along a great part of the street of that name. Rubens preserved the existing house and built to the right of it a sumptuous dwelling in the Italian style. The house he had bought had five windows on the ground floor, to the left of the front door, six windows on the first floor, and at the height of the roof one large and two small garret windows; the latter with steps, the former with steps and pinnacles, in the style of Flemish XVI century architecture. The house he built alongside had five large windows on the ground floor: five large square windows lit the first and only storey. This building had a roof with a flat cornice. Inside, the new building was separated from the old by a courtyard which was enclosed at the back by a portico with three openings giving access to the garden, which lay behind the whole of the structure and had an outlet on to the Hopland.

On the 28<sup>th</sup> July, 1627, Rubens bought three more small houses with gardens lying to the right of his property, in order to increase it. (2) He rebuilt them, turning them into two houses, which he let, and the entrance to a coach house for his own use, by the side of his house. Including this entrance, Rubens's house was 120 ft. wide along the street. When he had added the gardens of the three small houses to his own, it measured 160 ft. by 80 ft.

On the 5<sup>th</sup> June, 1614, Rubens's eldest son was baptized in St Andrew's church; the parents were then still living in their house in the Kloosterstraat. In 1615 the property in the Wapper was separated from the Harquebusiers' garden by a wall of masonry. It was not till 1616 that it was decided to build the staircase of the new house, and the statuary Jan van Mildert executed the sculptures in the following year. On the 12<sup>th</sup> May, 1618, Rubens wrote to Sir Dudley Carleton that in the course of that year he had devoted several thousand florins more to the completion of his house. But he lived in it from the beginning of 1616. When Martina Plantin died on the 17<sup>th</sup> February of that year, Rubens was invited to the funeral service, and in the register of the burial his name appears among those of the friends and acquaintances living in the quarter of the Arenbergstraat and the Lange Meistraat. We may take it, therefore, that in 1615, when he had his garden separated from the Harquebusiers', he installed himself in his new house, and that the completion and decoration of it were carried on for several years more. He was very busy on the work himself. No doubt he made use of the drawings of Genoese palaces which he had brought from Italy, and which he published in 1622. He consulted printed works too. In the first years of his taking up his residence in the Wapper, he procured several books on architecture, the only ones mentioned in his library accounts. In 1615 he bought of his friend Balthasar Moretus two different editions of Vitruvius, in 1616 he had Serlio's *Architettura* bound, and in 1617 the *Works of Solomon de Caus*, and in the same year he bought Vincenzo Scamozzi's *Architettura*, and Jacques Francquart's *Architecture* (3).

We possess two views of Rubens's house engraved on copper by Jacobus Harrewijn after drawings by J. van Croes. The older has this legend: Hilwerve House at Antwerp

(1) P. GÉNARD: *P. P. Rubens*, p. 442.

(2) F. JOS. VAN DEN BRANDEN: *Op. cit.* p. 506.

(3) *Bulletin-Rubens*, II, p. 180.

called the Hotel Rubens. 1684. « In the upper part is the medallion of an ecclesiastic, Hendrik Hillewerf, canon of the church of St James and proprietor of the house at that time. The engraving shows the inner court with the new building on the right, the old on the left, the portico at the back, and, at the bottom of the garden, a pavilion, which is seen through the central arch of the portico. The second is entitled : « Parts of Hilwerf House at Antwerp. 1692 ». Here we see, separately represented, the whole front of the property, a chapel surmounted by a cupola, lit from the roof and through a large window on the right, then a square bed-chamber with a cupola-shaped ceiling. The two last were evidently among the apartments built by Rubens. The engraving also contains, represented on a larger scale, a view of the house from the street to the pavilion, with a view of the side and back façades of the new building.

We have already described the appearance of the house on its street side ; on passing the entrance gate the visitor found himself in the courtyard, flanked on the left by the old building and on the right by the new. On the right a spacious staircase opened through two arcades on the corridor and through three others on the courtyard. On the first floor the back façade of the house was covered by a large fresco, the upper part representing « Andromeda delivered by Perseus », the lower part an Italian gallery with a balustrade with peacocks perched on it, in the style of the decorations in Paolo Veronese's pictures. On the second floor the back façade was pierced by three windows with caryatids against the wall between them.

On the right of the court stretched the lateral façade of the new building. A large door, surmounted by a rose-window, opened in the centre ; on either side on the first floor were two large arched windows. Below these came niches containing busts. On the second floor there were five more smaller windows. The building was crowned by a roof which projected some distance. Between the four large windows there were busts on pedestals ; and caryatids between the five smaller windows. The wall that lay between the large and the small windows was decorated with a series of paintings. In the angle formed by this façade and the portico stood some rock-work, the lower part forming a grotto in which sat a shepherd playing his pipe, with a stag by his side. A large spring of water flowed from the ground. The portico was composed of three arcades ; those on each side were perfect arches, the line of the centre one was broken. In the angles of the arcades lay satyrs, and above came marble busts of a faun and fauness. The central arcade was surmounted by a vase standing between two eagles with a festoon of fruits in their beaks and framed in a pediment crowned with a two-headed eagle. Above the portico stretched a balustrade on which stood two vases and two statues, of Mercury and Minerva. Under the busts came marble slabs engraved with two inscriptions from the 10<sup>th</sup> Satire of Juvenal :

Permites ipsis expendere numinibus, quid  
Conveniat nobis, rebusque sit utile nostris.....  
Carior est illis homo, quam sibi.

(Leave it to the gods to decide what is right for us and useful to our fortunes... They are better friends to man than himself).

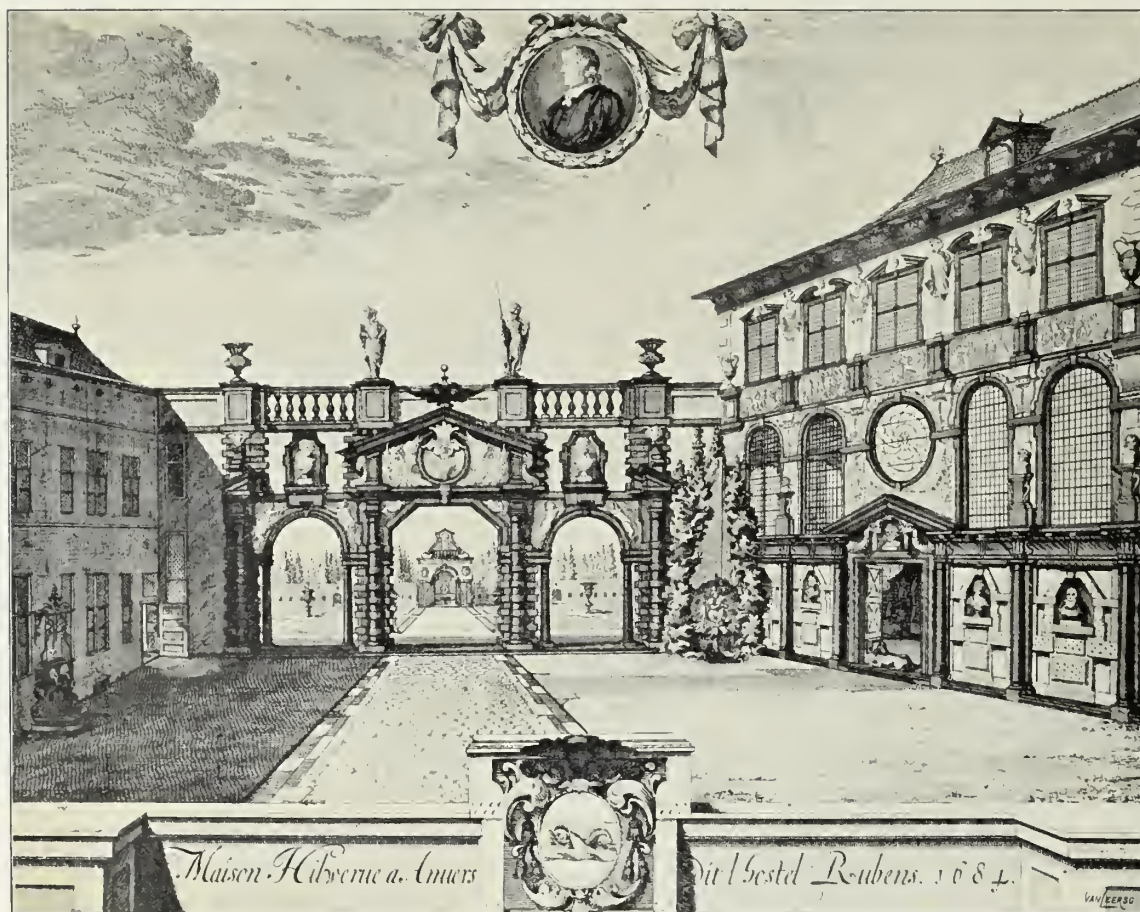
and on the right :

Orandum est, ut sit mens sana in corpore sano.  
Fortem posce animum, et mortis terrore carentem.....  
Nesciat irasci, cupiat nihil.



(Let your prayer be for a healthy mind in a healthy body. Pray for a brave heart, that knows not the fear of death... and is innocent of wealth and cupidity).

On passing through the portico, the visitor would have found himself in the garden, which was divided into symmetrical beds, with patches of turf imitating the flowers on a carpet. At



RUBENS'S HOUSE. VIEW OF THE COURT AND GARDEN.

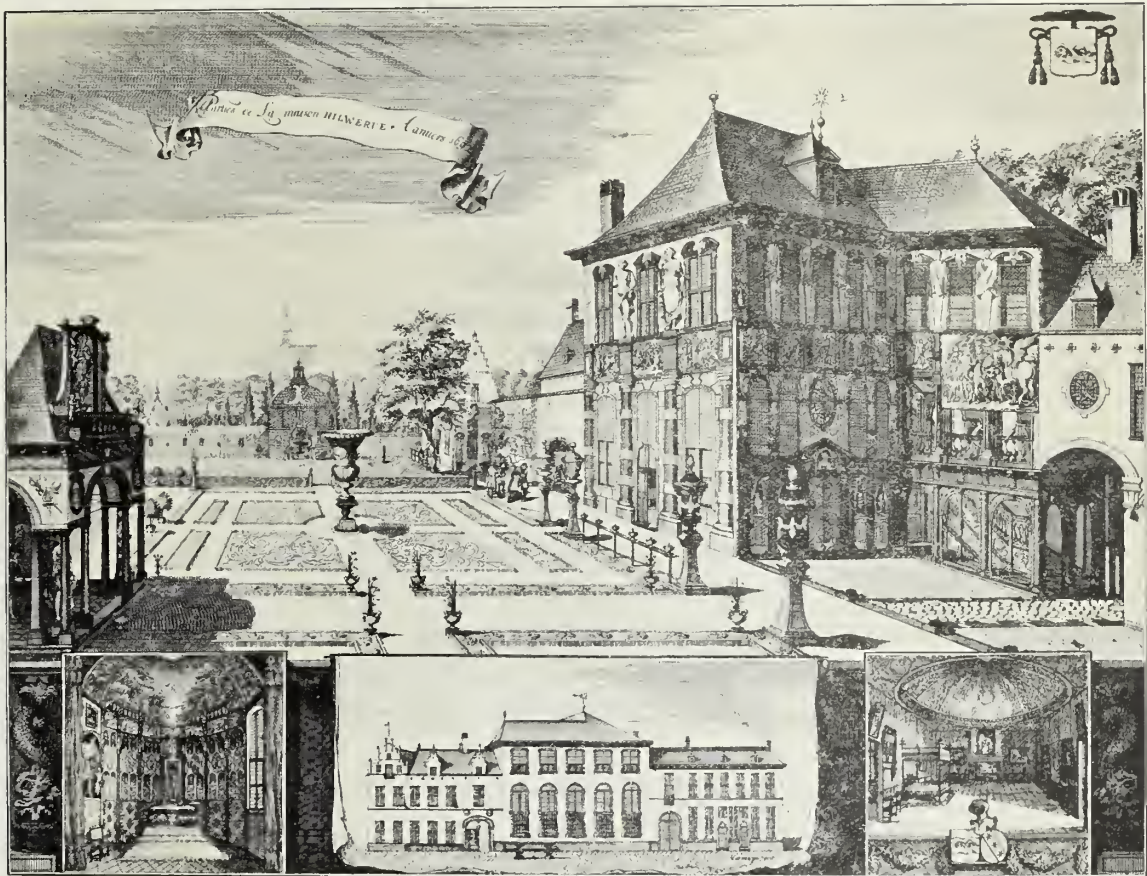
the corners of the beds and in the centre of the cross-paths stood some very large vases. At the bottom of the garden rose a graceful pavilion, a small square edifice, in the middle of which stood a statue of Hercules, flanked on the right and left by statues of Bacchus and Ceres between four columns.

The back of the lateral building looked out over the garden. It was pierced by a doorway between two windows of unusual size. The door, with the casement above it which could be opened at the same time, was, like the windows, two storeys high. The fresco was continued along this side.

The subjects of this fresco are only known to us by the microscopic reproduction given in Harrewijn's engravings. It is impossible to make out all of them. On the back façade of the projecting part, we can see, besides the « Perseus and Andromeda », a first scene that may perhaps represent « Venus and Adonis ». On the great lateral façade we can distinguish a

« Procession of Silenus », a « Judgment of Paris », the « Crowning of a Hero », a « Pagan Sacrifice », and in the centre a mythological subject that is indistinct. On the façade of the garden front there are three episodes of a Roman triumph.

Rubens's house was exactly like an Italian palace. On the street front the old and the new façades, which belonged to different styles, had nothing remarkable in their ornamentation ;



RUBENS'S HOUSE. VIEW OF THE GARDEN, THE FACADE AND TWO ROOMS.

but once past the threshold of the entrance gate, an magnificent effect became visible. The vestibule with its colonnade and its richly sculptured staircase, the courtyard with its lavish sculpture and painting on a façade of imposing proportions and distribution, the majestic style of the portico, with its prospect of the garden and pavilion, and the vases and statues that crowned it, all recalled rather a mansion in a land where the orange-tree bloomed, than a dwelling in our rude northern countries. Prince or tradesman, no one could enter without being struck by the luxury and good taste of the master of this abode.

Little remains of it all now : the palace, which any other city in the world would have jealously and respectfully guarded as one of its principal ornaments, the city of Rubens did not spare. The portico and pavilion still stand, and the skeleton of the house ; but inside all has been restored, transformed and spoiled : the ceilings and partition walls have been displaced ; the palace of former time has been turned into two middle-class houses of the most deplorable



taste imaginable. It is not easy, therefore, to distinguish its original arrangement. There can be no doubt that Rubens and his family made their dwelling-house in the old building on the left of the entrance; all are in complete agreement on that point. But where were his studio and his museum? What use was made of the cupolaed room represented in Harrewijn's engraving? The questions have been answered in various ways.

Francis Mols, an enthusiastic admirer of the master, gives a description in his notes of the house as he remembered having seen it. The alterations were made in 1763, and his note was written some twelve years later. He puts Rubens's studio in a room in the new building, with windows over the street, which would be spacious enough at the most for one of our modern *genre*-painters to settle in. He must have recognised himself that his theory would not hold, for he says at the end of his note: "I cannot understand how Rubens can have worked in comfort in a room opening on the staircase, and where consequently there would have been too much noise. I should rather believe that he set up his studio in a room in one of the small houses that stood next to the large one." In that case Rubens would have erected a sumptuous building to make no use of it. The whole theory is devoid of foundation, and it is hard to understand how a writer who had Harrewijn's engravings before him could have failed to see at once the purpose for which the new building was intended. To us it is evident that Rubens fixed his studio in the vast room on the ground floor, which was lit from the north through the four great windows and the rose-window looking over the courtyard, and from the east by the three still larger windows that opened on the garden. This room was 46 ft. long by 34 ft. 6 in. wide and about 30 ft. high. It was separated from the street by a gallery or antichamber, which had three windows opening over the street. This gallery was 33 ft. 6 in. long by 17 ft. wide, and certainly formed an appendage to the great studio. The studio was sufficiently lighted from the north and east, the entrance on the garden side gave easy passage to the most colossal canvases, and the arrangement and dimensions of the room were so planned that several large pictures could be placed there at the same time.

It is true that there are two documents which speak of pictures placed not in the ground-floor room but on the floor above. On the 12<sup>th</sup> September, 1612, Nicolas Rockox, chief of the Oath of the Harquebusiers, paid the workmen who had carried the "Descent from the Cross" from the garret to the ground floor of the painter's house, and on the 17<sup>th</sup> August, 1638, Rubens wrote to Lucas Faydherbe: "Be careful, when you leave, that everything is carefully locked up, and that there are neither originals nor sketches in the studio upstairs." But it is to be noted that in 1612 Rubens's house on the Wapper was not yet built, and that he was still living in the Kloosterstraat; as for the studio upstairs, it was evidently not Rubens's, but one of less importance in which his pupils worked.

Mols places the cupolaed bed-room on the first floor above the studio, between the room looking over the street and a room with an alcove opening on the garden. We may admit that this was so, but we are convinced that, though the cupolaed room may have been a bed-room in the time of Canon Hillewerf, Rubens did not put it to domestic uses any more than the adjoining rooms. The chapel, as we see it in the engraving, was Rubens's museum; with a contiguous antichamber, it lay near the garden, on the left, by the side of the portico, behind the old building, with which it communicated. "Between the courtyard and the garden", says



de Piles, — he built a room round in shape, like the Pantheon temple at Rome, which was lighted only from the top through a single opening in the centre of the dome. This room was full of busts, antique statues, and precious pictures which he had brought back from Italy, and of other things very rare and very curious. Sandrart writes : He built himself a very handsome and commodious house, having in the garden a museum in the shape of a rotunda, in which the light, falling from above, lit in the most favourable manner statues and pictures, both his own work and that of other distinguished artists, and other curiosities which he had collected. Mols says : The octagonal chapel, with its antichamber behind it, stood on the ground floor. The room above the antichamber had a gallery, where one could hear mass ; the chapel used formely to contain a considerable number of relics and shrines, placed one above the other in niches made in the corners. The circular room used as the museum resembled a tower and was called by that name (1). It must be noted that de Piles had never seen Rubens's house, and consequently described it from hearsay and approximately. That explains his placing the circular room between the courtyard and the garden, where nothing ever stood exept the portico ; the truth is that the pantheon stood in the garden near the old building. In 1692, when Harrewijn's engraving was executed, the pantheon had been turned into a chapel. The niches that were still to be seen there, had formely been used for marble busts. The cupboards where relics were kept later, had originally contained the medals and engraved stones of which Rubens had a large collection at the time of his death, and which we find mentioned in the inventory of the goods of Albert Rubens, under the titles of several boxes containing agates and two drawers containing divers caskets full of medals in copper and silver (2). There was no room there for pictures. The chapel and the antichamber, as they still were in Mols's time, could not have measured altogether more than 23 ft. by 13 ft. According to de Piles, Sandrart and the engraving, the chapel or pantheon was circular ; Mols makes it octagonal. It seems indeed that the wall on the inside was divided into eight parts, but the roof was in the form of a circular cupola. At the date when Mols wrote, that is, about 1775, the chapel was still standing. According to Victor van Grimbergen, the pantheon was not pulled down till a few years before 1840. This last writer draws a distinction between Rubens's pantheon and Canon Hillewerwe's chapel ; in our opinion it was one and the same building. We regard it as proved that it was built after the completion of the new house, and that Rubens had it built in the garden behind the house after he had markedly increased his collection in 1618 by the acquisition of Dudley Carleton's.

There is a picture in the Pitti palace in Florence, the work of an artist unknown, which represents a room with the walls entirely covered with pictures, and giving a view beyond into a semi-circular hall, lit from the top and furnished with a double row of niches in which stand antique busts and statues. The picture is entitled The studio of Rubens. The hall with niches would be his museum, and the figures in the room those of his wife and friends. None of them are recognisable in these figures, and the shape of the cupola does not agree with that we know in Harrewijn's engraving. It is true that among the pictures which decorate the room

(1) From the tower of the said house of the deceased where stood the antiquities of the deceased. *Archieven-Bulletin*, II, p. 81.

(2) *Bulletin-Rubens*, V, pp. 41-42.

there are two or three Rubenses, but that does not suffice to justify the title of « The studio of



THE COLLECTION OF AN ANTWERP AMATEUR (RUBENS?) IN THE XVII CENTURY  
After a picture by an artist unknown (Pitti Palace, Florence).

Rubens ». In any case the picture proves either that more than one cabinet of this sort had been built at Antwerp, or that the painter had seen and reproduced Rubens's museum. In the Stockholm Museum there is another picture representing an interior, which passes, not without some probability, for one of the rooms in Rubens's house. In it there are two richly dressed ladies talking and three children playing with two little dogs. Above the fireplace and along the walls hang three pictures by Rubens. The room is hung with gilded leather stamped with green flowers. There is also a black marble chimney-piece with gilt fire-dogs, and beneath the windows an oak table covered with an oriental carpet. Opposite this is a carved oak sideboard. The two ladies might be Isabella Brant and one of her friends. The three children appear to be the daughter and two sons of the master's first marriage. It follows that the picture represents a view of Rubens's dining-room, painted about 1622 by one of his artist friends. The painter might well be Sebastian Vranx, who received 300 florins from the estate of Isabella Brant for a picture painted for Rubens's first wife (1).

Rubens, therefore, built himself a house worthy of him, a veritable palace which excited the

(1) Item paid to Sebastian Vranx in full of what was due to him for a picture painted by him for the deceased and in her life-time. (*Bulletin-Rubens*, IV, p. 175).



ALBERT AND NICOLAS RUBENS  
(Lichtenstein Gallery, Vienna)











admiration of his fellow-citizens. They were proud of it, and no prince or foreigner of distinction visited the town without going to see it. When Balthasar Moretus conceived the idea of enlarging and beautifying his ancestral house, his friend Woverius wrote to him :

Forward, my dear Moretus, and continue to exalt the glory of your race, not only by your » art and your erudition, but also by the magnificence of your abode. Happy is our Antwerp, » to have two citizens like Rubens and Moretus ! The houses of both will be admired by



RUBENS'S DINING-ROOM. — Picture by an artist unknown (Museum, Stockholm)

» strangers and visited by travellers. We shall rejoice for all time in the favour and the friendship » of two such friends » (1). Golnitzius, who visited Rubens's house about 1625, declares that no pen could describe its wealth of pictures, statues and carvings. The Dane, Otto Sperling, who came to Antwerp in 1621, paid a visit to Rubens who bade a servant take him over his sumptuous house, and show him his antiquities and Greek and Roman statues. « We saw » also, » writes this traveller, « among other things, a vast room without windows, but lit » by a large opening in the middle of the ceiling. Several pupils were there, each engaged on » a different work, for which Rubens had provided them with drawings, the chalk outlines of » which he had touched here and there with colours ». This vast room could only be the upstairs studio of which Rubens speaks in his letter to Lucas Faydherbe, and the bed room with the cupola in the ceiling which appears in the engraving of Hilwerpe House, and which Mols also saw.

(1) J. Woverius to Balth. Moretus; 1<sup>st</sup> October, 1620. (Archives of the Plantin-Moretus Museum, Letters received T.-Z., p. 493).

In building this palace Rubens proved that he could look forward to the future with confidence, and that the first years of his return had already procured him a large competency. The Meir was the principal square in Antwerp, and the Wapper, which lay in its immediate vicinity, was therefore part of an aristocratic quarter. On this side there were still extensive grounds which were used as laundries and as places for the weavers to hang their linen, and this enabled Rubens to find space for the enormous garden that stretched behind his house. In 1611 he had bought the estate for 7600 florins, about £ 1800 in our money; the new buildings no doubt cost him more, so that, a few years after his marriage, he was in a position to spend a sum of more than £ 4000 on his dwelling, an evident proof of his rapid prosperity.

After Rubens's death, his house remained in the hands of his heirs for twenty years. In the inventory of the goods of Albert Rubens we find that in 1657 it was inhabited by the Marquis de Castel Nuovo, who paid an annual rent of 600 florins. On the 16<sup>th</sup> September, 1660, Giacomo van Eyck bought it for 20,000 florins (1). His widow, Cornelia Hillewerf, sold it, on the 18<sup>th</sup> January, 1680, to her brother Hendrik Hillewerf, and he made it over by deed of gift, on the 7<sup>th</sup> March, 1691, to two nuns, Joanna and Theresia van Eyck. It passed through several different hands, until, on the 3<sup>rd</sup> August, 1763, it was bought by Charles Nicolas Joseph de Bosschaert, whose descendants still own it. Till 1763, except for some internal modifications, it remained as it was in Rubens's time; then it was cruelly disfigured. The sixteenth century building was pulled down and replaced by another in the style of that date. The frescos which decorated the interior façades disappeared, the staircase was demolished, the studio was divided into two floors, and all that was original and beautiful in the buildings constructed by Rubens disappeared, except the portico and the pavilion. At the same time, the building was not pulled down. The street front and the courtyard front remain standing. The windows on the ground floor have of necessity been altered, but those on the first floor, which is now the second, seem to have been preserved.

The old roof, also, remains; the weather-cock and the torches that crowned it at the date when Harrewijn engraved it are still there, and above Rubens's studio may still be seen fixed in the gable a windlass with a very old wheel which was probably used to hoist very heavy panels. About 1840 the house was divided into two; therefore a second entrance became necessary, and a wall was built to cut the inner courtyard into equal parts, thus also dividing the portico between the two habitations. It is our sad and shameful duty to say that no private individuals, nor the town, nor the state saw the need of saving the house of the great artist before its mutilation, nor of restoring it after its disfigurement.

One of the subjects which Rubens painted on the interior façade of his house is approximately known to us by the *Perseus and Andromeda* of the Berlin Museum (*Œuvre*, N<sup>o</sup> 665). Andromeda, entirely nude, is fastened to the rock; by her side are two little loves, one of whom is helping Perseus to undo her bonds. A third holds the hero's winged steed by the bridle, while a fourth has mounted the horse and a fifth is trying to climb up. On the left are the sea and the slain monster lying on the shore. The painting is calm, a little cold,

(1) *Bulletin-Rubens*. V. pp. 53, 63.

and without much relief or effect of colour; the thin and uniform touch is thoroughly characteristic of fresco-painting.

Shortly afterwards, probably in 1617, Rubens painted the same subject again with several changes in the composition, but in the same light, thin, and rapid manner. This second picture (*Œuvre*. N<sup>o</sup> 666) belongs to the Hermitage Museum in St Petersburg. The date of the two panels corresponds with that of the fresco which decorated the lateral façade of Rubens's house.

RUBENS'S CHILDREN. — CLARA SERENA. -- In 1615, when Rubens began the building of his new house, his two eldest children were already born; the first was baptized on the 21<sup>st</sup> March, 1611, in St Andrew's church and received the name of Clara Serena. Her godfather was Philip Rubens and her godmother her grandmother Clara de Moy after whom she was named. The second name is perhaps an allusion to the Infanta who may have allowed them to consider her as godmother. M. Génard, finding the name of this child in no document that has come into his hands, supposes that she did not live long. It is not so : Clara Serena attained the age of twelve years and about seven months. We find her mentioned once only after the day of her baptism and that in a letter of condolence written soon after her death. On the 11<sup>th</sup> February, 1624, Peiresc wrote to his friend Rubens : « After a silence of several months maintained by so friendly a man as yourself, I am at last in receipt of a letter dated the 25<sup>th</sup> October in answer to that I wrote to you on board the boat between Bordeaux and Cadillac. Your silence pained me, especially since it deprived me of you most agreeable intercourse, and because it coincided with the loss of my rarest treasures, which I had spent many years in collecting, a loss of which I wrote to you at great length, so great perhaps as to weary you, last month (1). I found much consolation in reading your affectionate letter, but when I read the date and the postscript written later, my grief was renewed, and I could not but share the sorrow you must have felt at the death of your only daughter, who had already so many good qualities. Your wife's grief must have increased your own, by adding to your pain that of seeing the mother's sufferings. You are not of those who need consolation, for you know how ephemeral is human life, and what kindness God often shows us in taking a child from earth to give it new life in heaven, instead of exposing it to long illness, unhappiness, or trial, more cruel to a father's heart than death in the years of innocence. You should rather praise God for having so long preserved her to your love, and that perhaps will suffice to gain you a greater measure of the divine grace and blessing ». These fine consolations are all that history tells us of the child. The old parish registers contain nothing relating to her funeral. Rubens announced the death of his daughter in a postscript to a letter dated the 25<sup>th</sup> October, 1623; the postscript was added later; it was shortly after that date, then, that he must have lost his child.

However, there once was, and perhaps still is, in existence another souvenir of her : her

(1) During Peiresc's stay in Paris, the rarest specimens of his collection of gold coins, engraved stones and other antiquities were stolen from him at Aix in Provence. In his letter of the 13<sup>th</sup> November, 1623, he gave Rubens a long account of his misfortune.



portrait painted by her father. The inventory of the goods of Jan Brant, Rubens's father-in-law, mentions among numerous other pictures in the possession of the deceased : « Two small pieces of painting, on panels, framed, representing respectively, one the little son of the deceased Jan Brant, and the other Clara Serena Rubens, daughter of the Hr. Rubens aforesaid » (1). Of the two children represented in these little pictures, the former was born long before the latter. Jan Brant the younger, indeed was the brother of Isabella, Clara Serena's mother ; he was born on the 22<sup>nd</sup> August, 1596, and died unmarried. Rubens may have painted



CLARA SERENA RUBENS (?) (Liechtenstein, Vienna).

him before his departure for Italy, but it is also possible that he copied a portrait by another artist to make a pair with that of his daughter. The portrait of Clara Serena was probably her father's work. It is not known exactly what has become of it ; but it is quite possible that it is the portrait of a child in the Liechtenstein Gallery (*Œuvre*. N<sup>o</sup> 1134). Its resemblance to Albert Rubens had already struck Bode, who thought he saw in it Rubens's eldest son, while we have always taken this head of a child for that of a little girl. The little thing has a very lively look, and her smile is merry ; she wears a wide starched collar ; her raised eyebrows and all her dear little face strikingly recall the features of Isabella Brant.

ALBERT RUBENS. — Rubens's second child and eldest son, named Albert, was born on the 5<sup>th</sup> June, 1614 ; his godfather was the Archduke Albert, represented by the Señor don Juan de Silva, and his godmother Clara Brant, Isabella's sister. We have several

portraits of Albert in childhood, drawn by his father. The first scarcely deserves to be called a portrait. It is a pen-drawing in the Department of Prints in the British Museum, which shows two heads leaning back to back ; one is a woman's head, called by Rubens « *Psyche* », the other is a boy's head, and the artist has added this legend : *Cupido ex Albertuli mei imagine* (Cupid after my little Albert). The child as seen here can hardly be two years old ; he is shown in profile with a very bulging forehead, fat cheeks and long hair. The drawing is nothing but a sketch, and the features are not indicated with precision.

The Hermitage Museum at St Petersburg has two drawings of the portrait of Albert Rubens. The first shows his head and shoulders full face, with eyes wide open, and an astonished

(1) *Bulletin-Rubens*. IV. p. 230.

expression; in the other he is slightly side face with a very sweet look : in both he might be three or four years old, which justifies the supposition that he was drawn to serve as a model in the « Adoration of the Magi » in the church of St John at Mechlin. A fourth drawing, in the collection of Count Duchastel-Dandelot at Brussels (*Œuvre*. N<sup>o</sup> 1518), represents Albert Rubens at the age of about twelve. We cannot say that he is a pretty boy. The line of his features against the frame of his hair is anything but agreeable, the arch of his brows and his jaw form very marked projections, his nose is small and thick at the end, his mouth is large and his right brow markedly bent upwards, his eyes are very far apart, but his long curls fall gracefully down his cheeks. This drawing was used as a study for the portrait of Rubens's two elder sons, in the Prince Liechtenstein's Gallery at Vienna, of which the Dresden Museum has a replica (*Œuvre*. N<sup>o</sup> 1036). In this picture Albert wears a large felt hat with a soft brim. He is represented in an elegant attitude, with his left arm round his brother's shoulders and his right on his hip with a book in the hand, his legs crossed and a grey glove in his left hand ; he wears a wide white pleated collar, a black silk vest with slashings of white linen on chest and arms, wide breeches, and shoes ornamented with ribbons over the instep. He looks healthy and jolly, and is a fine strapping boy of whom his father's magic brush has made a model of distinction. But his features are not handsome ; the wide mouth, the eyes set too far apart, the small nose, and the prominent jaws, which the boy had inherited from his mother, are preserved in this superb painting.



ALBERT RUBENS — Drawing (Hermitage, St Petersburg).

We find in several pictures children for whom Albert sat ; like the « Adoration of the Magi » at Mechlin and three other Adorations of the same period. The case is the same with the « Saint Joseph with the Infant Jesus », a drawing belonging to Count Duchastel-Dandelot, from which the picture in the church of the Reformed Carmelites at Morlane near Namur was afterwards painted, and with the « Procession of Silenus » at Berlin and several others.

Albert Rubens appears to have been the favourite of his father, who never speaks of him without pride and tenderness. In writing to his friend Gevartius at Madrid on the 29<sup>th</sup> December, 1628, he says : « I beg you will put my little Albert, like my own portrait, not in your sanctuary nor among your household gods, but in your study. I love the boy and most fervently recommend him to you, as to my best friend and the high priest of the Muses, that you may care for him like my father-in-law and brother-in-law Brant, during my life and after my death ». On the 15<sup>th</sup> September, 1629, he wrote again to Gevartius in London concerning Albert : « I hope my son will inherit at least my obligations to you, since he enjoys so large a share of your favour, and owes to your good instruction all that is best in him. I shall

esteem him all the more highly for his being esteemed by you, whose judgment has more weight than mine. I have always found him full of good will. I am very happy to hear that he is better, and thank you heartily for the good news and for the honour you paid him and the consolation you afforded him in going to see him during his illness. He is too young *si natura ordinem servet* (according to the course of nature) to go before us. God grant him life that he may live well, *neque enim quam diu, sed quam bene agatur fabula refert* (for it is no question of long life, but of good life) ».

From this passage we may conclude that Rubens had entrusted the education of his son to Gevartius. From other sources we know that he went to school with the Augustine fathers. The fruits of this education were what might have been expected. Albert Rubens devoted himself to the study of Greek, Latin, antiquities and numismatics. In a letter written to Peiresc on the 10<sup>th</sup> August, 1630, Rubens suggests the explanation of a tripod and some other antiquities of which his friend had sent him drawings. He says at the end of his letter : « I add several passages from Greek and Latin authors which my son has found for me to support my opinion. He is working hard at the study of antiquities and making very good progress in Greek literature ; he reveres in the highest degree your name and your lofty intellect ; grant him your good will and the right to call himself one of your disciples ». Then follows a whole page of quotations relating to tripods, taken from the works of Isidorus, Athenæus, Julius Pollux, Servius, Pausanias, and Suidas, with which the young scholar had supplied his father.

Throughout his life Albert Rubens had a taste for these branches of knowledge and won an honourable reputation in them. Singularly enough, he published none of his writings, and when it happened that one was printed, he did not put his name to it. There is only one exception. When John Hemelarius published in 1627 the second edition of the gold coinage of the Roman emperors in the collection of Charles de Croy, duke of Aerschot, Albert Rubens put at the head of the work a panegyric in Latin verse according to the taste of the time, and, in his juvenile presumption, signed his name to it : he was then thirteen. Considerable literary production might have been expected from an author who began to publish at that age. The forecast was falsified : Albert Rubens published nothing more.

Twenty-seven years later, when Hendrik Aertssens wished to print a new edition of the duke of Aerschot's coins, he approached Gaspard Gevartius, and asked him if he could not procure him something that would give new lustre to the reissue. Gevartius replied that one of his friends, a distinguished archaeologist, had written some time before a compendious but learned dissertation on the coinage of the Empire, and that it was well worth inserting in the work. The printer applied to the writer in question for the necessary authorization and obtained it ; but the scholar pointed out to him that his dissertation had been written more than twenty years before, that it was not intended for publication and that he no longer had the time to revise it ; in conclusion he left the printer free to do what he pleased with it, but forbade him to put his name to it. The scholar was no other than Albert Rubens, as Gevartius afterwards told Graevius.

He wrote several other dissertations on Roman antiquities, but had none of them printed. In the course of his last illness, when he believed his days to be numbered, he expressed a



desire that his heirs should undertake the publication of his essays, which formed a badly arranged packet of sheets. He sent them to Gevartius, begging him to send them to the scholar Joannes-Fredericus Gronovius of Leyden, to be classified and published. Gronovius passed them in his turn to the archaeologist Joannes-Georgius Graevius, who through the medium of Gevartius had them printed in 1665 by Moretus. The most important of these essays is devoted to the dress of the Romans; the other five treat of engraved stones, coins and other antiquities. Later, Graevius re-edited these essays in the sixth and eleventh volumes of his *Thesaurus Antiquitatum Romanarum*. Albert Rubens had added to the writings destined for Gronovius his memoir on the celebrated engraved stones of Augustus and Tiberius which Rubens had engraved on copper, and the explanation of which had provoked the exchange of a number of letters between him and his friend Nicolas Peiresc. When he sent this essay to Gevartius in 1655, he told him that Peiresc's letters on the subject were still in his possession. It is probable that he possessed other parts of his father's correspondence as well, but the whole of the precious treasure has disappeared, without leaving any traces.

Albert Rubens was twenty when he wrote his commentary on the duke of Aerschot's coins; and four years before, he had already been appointed to the post of secretary to the privy council of the country; his patent is dated the 15<sup>th</sup> June, 1630. He was not to enter upon active service until his father's death, or when the latter resigned his appointment. The latter alternative happened on the 19<sup>th</sup> April, 1640, when Rubens, feeling his strength decreasing, made over to his eldest son the secretaryship of state with the emoluments attached to it. Meanwhile, the young man followed the practice of men of quality, literary men and artists, and took a journey into Italy; his father wrote to Peiresc on the 18<sup>th</sup> December, 1634, that Albert was then at Venice, that his travels in Italy were to last a complete year, and that he would then go to Provence, to visit the French scholar there.

After his marriage, which was celebrated on the 3<sup>rd</sup> January, 1641, Albert went to live in Brussels. His wife was Clara Delmonte, daughter of Raymond and Susannah Fourment, the sister of Helena, Rubens's second wife. We know from the numerous portraits our painter made of Susannah Fourment, how highly he esteemed the woman in the straw hat, the future mother-in-law of his son. Albert Rubens and his wife died young: the former on the 1<sup>st</sup> October, 1657, and the latter on the 25<sup>th</sup> November following; they were both buried in the church of St James, in Peter Paul Rubens's chapel. Albert himself explains the cause of the illness which brought his brief existence to a close. On the 31<sup>st</sup> December, 1656, he wrote to his friend Daniel Heinsius: 'My only son, a child who gave the fairest hopes, was slightly bitten by a dog at the end of last June; fifty days later, he was attacked by hydrophobia; madness followed, and at the end of a few hours he was taken from me. The blow has so prostrated me that I can scarcely recover my senses'. The unhappy boy died on the 11<sup>th</sup> September, 1656; and thereafter his father never enjoyed a moment's health and died a year later (1).

(1) On Albert Rubens: J. C. G. BOOI: *Johannis Frederici Gronovii ad Albertum Rubenium Epistolæ* X. Rome, Reale Academia dei Lincei, 1877. — ALBERT RUBENS: *De re vestiaria veterum*, Antwerp, Plantin, 1655. — BURMANNUS: *Sylloges epistolarum*. II, p. 761. — J. G. GRAEVIVS: *Thesaurus Antiquitatum Romanarum*, 1677, fol. Preface to Part VI. — *Bulletin-Rubens*. III, p. 101, and V. 11.

NICOLAS RUBENS. — Rubens's second son, Nicolas, was baptized on the 23<sup>rd</sup> March, 1618, at the church of St James; his godfather was Andrea Picheneotti, representing Nicolo Pallavicini, the Genoese noble with whom Rubens maintained friendly relations. In July 1607, he had lodged with the duke of Mantua's suite in Pallavicini's house, which he reproduced in the *Palaces of Genoa*. Later, he painted for the altar of St Ignatius in the Jesuits' church at Genoa a picture which this gentleman had ordered of him, representing the *Miracles of St Ignatius*. He was also probably one of the Genoese merchants for whom Rubens painted in 1618 the cartoons for tapestry representing *The History of Decius Mus*.



NICOLAS RUBENS — Drawing (Albertina Vienna).

Nicolas Rubens afterwards obtained the title of lord of Ramey by the acquisition of that domain, on the 16<sup>th</sup> April, 1643. His biography presents little of interest. On the 9<sup>th</sup> October, 1640, he married Constantia Helman, who bore him seven children. He died on the 28<sup>th</sup> September, 1655. We know him best from the picture where he is represented with his brother Albert, of which we spoke above. Nicolas Rubens was then seven or eight years old. He is bareheaded with a little blue vest slashed with yellow and ornamented with ribbons of the same shade. His short breeches are grey and his stockings white with yellow ribbons. In his right hand is a perch on which sits a goldfinch, and in his left the thread by which the bird is fastened. The game he is playing was held in great honour for centuries by the youth of Antwerp, and has only fallen into disuse

in our own days. Nicolas is presented nearly in profile, with his right leg a little forward. Like his brother he has long light auburn hair. He is a charming little boy in his elegant gala-dress. His features are more regular than his brother's and recall more strongly his father's physiognomy. Rubens painted him several times. We find him again, scarcely two years older, in the *Boy and Bird* of the Berlin Museum (*Œuvre*. N<sup>o</sup> 1038). We recognise him also in several pictures that contain children. In the *Marriage of Marie de Medici*, he is sitting on the first of the two lions which draw the car of the town of Lyons; in the *Virgin and Repentant Sinners* in the Cassel Museum, we see both the boys, Albert, aged five, and Nicolas, aged one; in the *Rubens walking with Helena Fourment*, in the Munich Pinakothek, he is following the newly married pair. His father drew him any number of times. The Albertina has four different portraits of him, all of remarkable execution. One represents him at about two years old (*Œuvre*. N<sup>o</sup> 1520), another, probably drawn about the same time, is more side-face (*Œuvre*. N<sup>o</sup> 1521) and was used, like the first, as a study for the little boy in the *Virgin and*

Repentant Sinners » ; there is a portrait in black chalk, again, which was used as a study for the picture in the Liechtenstein Gallery ; and finally one more, in which he is represented at about eight or nine years old, with a heavy woollen cap on his head, long curly hair which falls over his shoulders, and a cloak, the skirt of which is wrapped over his chest and thrown over his shoulder (*Œuvre*. Nos 1523-1524).

RUBENS'S TRANSITION TO HIS SECOND MANNER. — In the course of the three last years of Rubens's residence in his house in the Kloosterstraat, during which he produced the works we have now to speak of, his manner changed sensibly, and he entered on a new period of his artistic career, which lasted from 1612 to 1625. He discards the academic forms and dried up tones he had adopted beyond the Alps, he looks at the world with his own eyes, and renders it according to his own conception. We might say that now he had returned to his native country and begun to taste the repose of the domestic hearth after a life of agitation, now that his future was assured and a brilliant career opened before him, he became calmer in his contemplation of the world, and more Flemish in his mode of representing it. His figures return to more normal proportions ; they take on an air of health, plumpness and a white skin ; the finely limbed men and the opulently formed women are all fair children of the North. There is moderation in their action, serene harmony in their movement ; they look more content and happier because the artist who created them was himself happy and content. With the mighty poetry carried on from the works executed in the manner of the great heroic painters of Italy, he mingles now the more temperate tone of real life, more in accord with Flemish art. His colour and light, too, became brighter and gayer ; he spreads genial and brilliant tones in large unbroken masses. His pictures are no longer lit by the dawn of the Italian primitives, nor the flaming sunset of the Venetians, nor the characterless clearness of the Florentines, nor the falling night of the last naturalist painters of the peninsula, but by the golden warm light of noon. The shadows are not so dense and their part is reduced to more modest proportions. The outlines lose their former hardness while keeping their precision. The transition from his Italian to his Flemish manner produces a period of reaction against those old methods, during which the new became exaggerated : his reality becomes timidity, his moderation, insipidity, his sweetness, feebleness. The pictures of 1613 to 1615 belong to this period of pause or retreat, in which the splendour of his art seems to die away ; but he was soon to triumph over the crisis, and shake off his torpor to become once more the master of the matter he treated and the brush he wielded.

This sharp transformation in Rubens's manner, this break with southern influences is one of the most surprising and decisive events in the artist's career. It is easy to understand how in Flanders he became a Fleming again, and how under a different light and in the midst of a fair population he did not continue to paint as he had done under the sky of the south. But it seems strange that he should have been able to carry a soft and light manner to extremes. The only explanation we can offer of this phenomenon is that, consciously or unconsciously, he returned to his pre-1600 manner, which had been adopted under the influence of Otho Vænius. This solution of the problem may seem surprising, but it appears to us incontestable. If the « Unbelief of St Thomas » of 1613 shows any affinity with anterior art, it is with the art of his master. In him and in him only do we find the fat fleshy figures, graceful in attitude



but without muscles, and the pale, light tones with no brilliance or life, which characterize Rubens's works between 1613 and 1615. Even during that critical period he is far above Otho Vænius, but a family likeness between them becomes marked anew for a time; the proofs are palpable: the pictures of this period throw back in a striking manner to those of 1600. The *Hercules drunk* and the *Virtuous Hero* in the Dresden Museum, which were painted immediately before he left Antwerp or immediately after he arrived in Italy, are closely related to the works he executed during the four or five years which followed his return; the Venus in the picture we have just mentioned is the twin sister of the Shivering Venus of 1614 in the Antwerp Museum.

The pictures he painted in Italy and during the first three years after his return to Antwerp seem to be like a brilliant intermezzo between the rare productions of his prentice years and the prodigious series of master-pieces of his maturity. It was chiefly by means of the last that he ruled the world of art for thirty years, and founded the school that was to reign unrivalled in this country for nearly a century.

THE DESCENT FROM THE CROSS. At the outset of the second period of Rubens's artistic career stands one of his master-pieces; *The Descent from the Cross* (*Œuvre*. Nos 307-310). The picture was ordered of him by the Guild of the Harquebusiers of Antwerp for its altar in the church of Notre-Dame, in the right hand portion of the transept against the wall where the triptych now hangs, but rather nearer the entrance. The Guild had premises in the Gildekamerstraat (the street of the Harquebusiers) which stretched from the middle of the street to the Hopland, and adjoined at the back the laundry which Rubens bought as a site for his house. The order for the picture coincides with the purchase. On the 4<sup>th</sup> January, 1611, the conveyance of the property on the Wapper was drawn up, and on the 13<sup>th</sup> March following the Chamber met to deliberate on the erection of a new altar.

In September of the same year another meeting was held to which the painter was invited, and in the presence of Nicolas Rockox, chief of the Guild and burgomaster of Antwerp, they gave him the order for the retable of the new altar. According to the custom of the times, the contract was freely toasted, and the cost, amounting to 16 florins 18 stuivers, was charged to the account of the Guild.

The painter went to work without delay, for before a year had passed, the deans had already visited him three times to press him to complete his work and to see that the wood of his panel was of good quality and without flaws. In the course of these three visits they spent nine florins ten stuivers in wine and tips to Rubens's pupils. On the 12<sup>th</sup> September, 1612, the treasurer of the Guild paid 177 florins 14  $\frac{1}{4}$  stuivers to the workmen, among other things for bringing the centre panel from the attic where Rubens had his studio and conveying it to the chapel of the Guild in the church of Notre-Dame. Seventeen months more passed before the first shutter of the triptych was finished and conveyed from the painter's house to the church. That took place on the 18<sup>th</sup> February, 1614, and sixteen days later, on the 6<sup>th</sup> March, the second shutter followed it. On the 8<sup>th</sup> January, 1615, Rubens received on account of the sum agreed upon, which was 2400 florins, a first instalment of 1000 florins, and Isabella Brant

was given, according to the general practice, a pair of richly embroidered gloves, valued at 8½ florins. On the 13<sup>th</sup> February, 1622, the balance of 1460 florins was paid.

The altar had undergone considerable changes; the old railing which surrounded it was sold and replaced by a new and more sumptuous one with copper pillars. The altar itself was rebuilt in the Corinthian style, designed, we are assured, by Rubens. On the 22<sup>nd</sup> July, 1614, the bishop of Antwerp granted this altar an annual indulgence, and on that occasion a splendid banquet was held on the same day in the premises of the Guild, to which the bishop, the superior clergy and the magistrates of the town were invited, the expense amounting to the large sum of 470 florins 4 stuivers. The altar was consecrated on the 2<sup>nd</sup> August, and mass was sung at it in honour of St Christopher, the patron saint of the Guild. On the 25<sup>th</sup> July, 1615, Franchoy De Crayer, master-mason, was ordered to build the party wall to separate Rubens's property from the Harquebusiers' garden. No doubt through all these business matters, the president Nicolas Rockox used his influence in favour of the great artist, who was his intimate friend (1).

The patron saint of the Harquebusiers was St Christopher. In Rubens's days, the drums of the Guild of the Harquebusiers were wont to present their New Year greetings to the members of the Guild on a sheet of paper ornamented with a print of St Christopher performing his traditional deed, of crossing the river with the child Jesus on his shoulder, while the hermit goes before to light the way; the retable was to represent an episode in his life. St Christopher was a martyr who died for the faith in Asia Minor about the middle of the third century. His history is one of the most interesting perpetuated by popular tradition; it is a veritable fairy-story, full of marvels and astonishing inventions. According to the Golden Legend (2), St Christopher was of colossal size and terrifying appearance. He had resolved to take service with the greatest prince in the world; and presented himself before a king whom he regarded as the most powerful in the world, and was accepted. One day a minstrel came to the king's court and sang before the king a song in which mention was often made of the devil; every time the king heard the name he made the sign of the cross. Christopher wished to know the reason of this, and when his master told him that it was to make the devil powerless the good giant understood that there was some one in the world more powerful than his prince. « Farewell », said he, « for I am going to find the devil, that he may be my lord and I his servant ». While crossing a desert, he met the devil, took service with him and followed him. On their way they came near a cross; and immediately the devil took another path and left it far on one side. When Christopher asked the reason of this strange conduct, the devil was forced to confess that he was afraid of some one called Jesus Christ, who had hung on the cross. The result was that Christopher set off in search of him who could put the devil to flight. When he had wandered long, seeking and asking who might be able to show him Christ, he came at length to a hermit's, and the hermit preached Christ to him and instructed him in the faith. And the hermit said to Christopher: « The king thou wouldst serve would have thee serve him in fasting often ». Christopher answered: « Let him ask of me other services, for that I cannot render ». When the hermit was convinced

(1) Register of the Guild of the Harquebusiers (Municipal Archives of Antwerp).

(2) *Passionael — dat men hiet die gulden legende*, Henrick Eckert van Homberch, 1505, Part II, fol. 96.

that fasting was not a rule that could be imposed on the giant, he bade him take his station on the bank of a river, and carry over to the other bank all who might ask him to do so. That was more to the taste of the mighty man, and he accepted his new mission immediately. Another form of the legend adds that at night-time and in bad weather the hermit accompanied him with a lantern (1). Long afterwards, he was sitting one day in his hut on the bank of the river, when he heard a voice calling : « Come, Christopher, and carry me over the water ». After looking for a long time, he found a child, whom he took on his shoulder ; then he entered the water. But the water began to rise extraordinarily high, and the child to become as heavy as lead. Christopher thought he would drown ; but at last he succeeded in crossing the river, and said : « Child, if I had carried the whole world on my shoulders, the burden would not have seemed so heavy ». Then the child answered : « Christopher, be not astonished, for thou wast carrying not only the world on thy shoulders, but Him also who created the » world. I am Christ whom thou servest by thy labours ». And the marvellous child straightway disappeared. The legend assigns Christopher other not less prodigious adventures, and ends in his death as a martyr.

The Christopher of this legend became one of the most popular saints of the Middle Ages. To the people, who set great store on physical strength, this kind and beneficent giant was the highest expression of goodness, and as in his life-time he had taken pleasure in helping small and great, so after his death he was to prove himself a succour to all. Whoever saw him in the morning smiled till night-fall ; whoever met him during the day was preserved from all evil, and especially from sudden death. Care was taken, therefore, that the faithful should have no difficulty in finding him : colossal statues of him, sometimes 30 feet high, were placed at the doors of the old churches, and some of them may be seen to this day. The saint was always represented with the child Jesus on his shoulder. His Greek name Christophoros means the Christ-bearer ; thence came the figure, which in its turn gave birth to the legend.

The saint and the hermit also played an important part in the Guild of the Harquebusiers of Antwerp. The grand processions of Lady Day and Pentecost included a St Christopher carrying the child, and accompanied by the hermit, and the expenses of the group were born by the funds of the Harquebusiers. The colossal figure representing the saint was carried by a man who walked inside the paste-board effigy, which was fastened to his shoulders by straps. In 1618, the accounts of the Guild mention seven straps with buckles for the image of St Christopher, costing 2 florins 8 stuivers ; in 1621, they paid 10 florins for repairing and repainting the saint's legs ; in 1624, the mending of his sarsenet costume cost 1 florin 4 stuivers ». The man who bore the figure was himself called the Christopher of the Guild. The hermit walked in front of him carrying his lantern. In 1623 they paid 2 florins for the beard of the hermit who walks before Christopher ». The Child Jesus was fastened to St Christopher's shoulder by a white leather strap ; it was a wicker doll with a painted head and rich garments. In 1631, the Guild paid 1 florin 14 stuivers for a white leather strap for the Child Jesus, 6 florins 10 stuivers to the basket maker who had mended the head of the Child, and 5 florins 10 stuivers to the painter who had painted it » ; two years before, they had

(1) CAHIER : *Caractéristique des Saints*, pp. 501, 446.





THE DESCENT FROM THE CROSS  
Centre panel (Cathedral, Antwerp)

the descent was not a feat that could be imagined on the spot. He made men take his staffs and the body of a man, and carry over to the other bank all who might risk their lives. That was done in the state of the mighty man, and he assumed his new stature immediately. Another basis of the legend adds that at nightfall and in bad weather the hermit accompanied two yoke of oxen (1). Long afterwards, he was sitting one day in his hut on the bank of the river when he heard a voice calling: 'Come, Christopher, and carry me over the water'. After waiting for a long time, he found a child, whom he took on his shoulders; then he entered the water. But the water began to rise extraordinarily high, and the child to become as heavy as lead. Christopher thought he would drown: but at last he succeeded by coasting the river, and said: 'Child, if I had carried the whole world on my shoulders, the burden would not have seemed so heavy'. Then the child answered: 'Christopher, be not astonished, for thou wast carrying not only the world on thy shoulders, but thou also who created the world. I am Christ, whom thou servest by thy labour'. And the marvellous child straightway disappeared. The legend inspired Christopher with his prodigious adventures, and ends in his death as a martyr.

The Christopher of the legend became one of the most popular saints of the Middle Ages. To the people with no great store of abstract thought, the kind and beneficent giant was the highest expression of goodness and power. The child he had taken pleasure in taking small and weak men on his shoulders, he carried on his shoulders a burden to all. Whoever gave him to the mother world his weakness, Christopher would support him, and protect him from all evil, and especially from sin. Christopher was the patron saint of all who should face no difficulty in bearing their burden. His image was placed at the mouth of the old speulder, and was still there by this day. The saint was always represented with the cross on his shoulders. The Greek name Christodoulos meant the Christ-bearer. From this meaning, which also gave birth to the legend.

The saint and the legend also played an important part in the Guild of the Harquebusiers of Antwerp. The guild, composed of men who had hereof bought a St Christopher carrying the child, got recognised by the town council in 1460 on the expenses of the town council by the hands of the Harquebusiers. The Harquebusiers representing the same corporation as a man who walked barefoot, carrying a child, which was fastened to his shoulders by straps. In 1615, the accounts of the Guild mention a man going with a child on his back, carrying and repainting the saint's back. In 1624, the Guild of the Harquebusiers bought 4 florin 4 stuivers. The man who bore the figure was named called the 'Christopher' of the Guild. The figure walked in front of the carrying his lantern. In 1625 they paid 2 florin for the heard of the hermit who walks before Christopher. The child Jesus was fastened to Christopher's shoulder by a yellow leather strap. It was a wooden doll with a painted face and red garments. In 1631, the Guild paid 14 stuivers for a white leather strap for the child Jesus, 6 florin 10 stuivers for the wooden cross, who had mended the head of the child, and 3 florin 10 stuivers for the figure, who had passed it. Two years before they had

(1) *Legende des saints*, p. 202, 203, 204.



THE DESCENT FROM THE CROSS





paid 17 florins 14 stuivers for 6 1/2 ells of silk figured damask, and 3 1/2 ells of yellow cloth to dress the Child Jesus.

Rubens's task was to glorify the saint's actions on the retable of his altar. History could furnish him with little or no material; but popular legend was less niggardly. Rubens was not a painter of mediaeval legends; the marvellous tales that have so much charm for us did not interest him at all; and so he gave the legend of St Christopher a very secondary place in his work. The saint crossing the river with the Child Jesus on his shoulder and the hermit going before to light the way with his lantern only occur on the outside of the shutters of the triptych.

The name of Christopher, which was the source of the legend, was also to supply the artist with the subject of his work. Rubens and Nicolas Rockox, both scholars, found it more distinguished and more in conformity with the usages of art to take as subjects for the triptych those who are mentioned in the Gospels as having carried Christ. They chose therefore the « Descent from the Cross », the « Visit of Our Lady », who had carried Christ during her pregnancy, and the « Offering in the Temple », where the high priest Simeon bore the infant in his arms. The two first subjects had been treated several times by Italian and Flemish masters; with the third it was not so.

Rubens painted the « Descent from the Cross » on the central panel. The Christ is completely detached from the cross, and remains suspended half way up the middle of the picture, his head hanging over his shoulder, one of his arms raised, the other hanging, his legs bent beneath his distended body, but with no stiffness in the limbs. The corpse is livid and bloodless, the skin is pale yellow in tone with bluish tints in the modelling, and red blood continues to drip from the wounds in hands, feet and side. Christ is dead, but death has spared him her marks of terror. The body, which is of perfect beauty, stands out on the right against a large shroud, of a warm white, which is to envelop it. The friends of Christ form a circle round the body and the shroud. Two assistants are at work, hanging over the arms of the cross. The one on the left is naked to the waist and bends forward in a bold attitude, with one leg on the ladder and the other swinging in the air. In one hand he holds the end of the winding-sheet, with the other he follows the body of Christ in its descent with a gesture that reveals his anxiety to prevent a fall. The other worker is an old man, going grey, who is entirely absorbed in his task; with the shroud between his teeth, he upholds Christ by his lifted arm. Half way up, two important people stand on the ladder, on the left a man with a large brown beard, a red cap on his head and his body enveloped in a brown brocade cloak embroidered in gold; on the right another, bareheaded, with a full beard, and wearing a robe of deep violet. They are doing little; they appear to be superintending, but serve chiefly as decorative figures to fill the panel.



ST CHRISTOPHER CARRYING THE INFANT CHRIST  
Drawing (London, British Museum).



On the right stands St John, wearing a brick-red robe, with one foot on the lowest rung of the ladder, the other on the ground; the upper part of his body is thrown backward by the weight of Christ, which rests on his chest and arm. On the other side of the cross Mary Magdalen, the friend of the Virgin, kneels on the ground; she has long fair hair, and delicate and regular youthful features, and wears a bronze-green robe with amber coloured lights, from which a white scarf falls lightly over her back and shoulders. The foot of the corpse rests on her young, fresh skin; in one hand she holds the shroud, in the other Christ's leg. If she, most sweet and gentle, touches the Saviour, it is not to help those at work, but to let her caressing fingers give him one last mark of affection. By her side kneels Mary, the wife of Cleophas, another youthful figure, wearing a pale blue robe with a bright brown scarf over her shoulders. Behind her the Virgin Mary, completely enveloped in a dark blue cloak, stands up in profound desolation, with arms outstretched towards her beloved. On the ground to the right lies a copper dish with blood at the bottom; the nails and crown of thorns are in the dish; by the side of it lie the sponge and the superscription from the cross. The background is obscure, except high up on the left, where the gold of the setting sun glows in broad bands.


The colours are more varied than in the master's previous works, but they have no brilliance nor interaction. The Christ stretched on the shroud between the brown torso of the workman leaning over the arm of the cross and St John's red robe makes with these two contrasts the high light of the composition. The colour thus focussed spreads over the grey-headed workman and the blonde Magdalen; then the tones become veiled and extinguished, and the pale note of the faces is all that attracts the eye. The light has become paler; it falls obliquely from right to left, flows in waves over the corpse of Christ and the shroud, the head of Mary Magdalen and her robe of yellowish green, and lights more sweetly the side of the figures towards Christ. The painter has conceived it as emanating from a supernatural source, for the effect does not extend beyond the group. Evening has fallen over the landscape, and on the left the spot is unlighted save by a narrow strip of ruddy glow, the last reflection of the sun setting behind the hills. The light that falls on the workmen can only come from heaven, which has sent it to allow them to pay the last offices to the God-Man. The use of this miraculous light explains how it is possible that the centre of the picture should be bathed in so sweet a glow, while beyond the group stretches thick darkness.

The brilliant light of the south has disappeared, and with it the colossal forms that Rubens had learned to admire in Italy. While still healthy and robust, these figures have returned to moderate proportions. The workman with the nude torso has knotty arms and swollen muscles in his back. Mary Magdalen's flesh is soft and plump. Of the rest, with the exception of the Christ, nothing but the heads and draperies is to be seen. The sentiment springing from the whole picture is one of affection and respectful solicitude. The unity and harmony of the composition are marvellous. The Christ dominates everything; all are crowding round him, to him all eyes are directed, all arms outstretched; towards him flows the tenderness of all these souls, no less than the action of all these bodies. His whiteness, chilled by tints of bluish grey, and the pale warmth of the tone of the shroud, dominate the varied colouring of the living; the graceful lines of his sorrowful silhouette make an admirable contrast with their strained action and poignant emotions. The group, like a compact bunch of human grapes, but yet free





in movement, crosses the whole panel from top to bottom and from left to right; all the actions are natural and varied; not a gesture but is a prodigy of justice and grace.

If the execution of this picture differs from that of the  *Elevation of the Cross* , the emotions represented by the two triptychs are no less different. In the former we saw the opposition of human perversity and the voluntary self-sacrifice of the God-Man; here we see the intimate adoration of the revered martyr and Saviour. And just as the first picture remains the most violent expression of hatred and brute force, so the « *Descent from the Cross* » remains, in the work of Rubens and in universal art, the highest glorification of union in action and in love. Those who loved Christ are assembled here: the women who believed in him, the mother who forgot her grief to aid her Son for the last time; John, the well-beloved, who bore the heaviest part of the burden, as, at the Last Supper, he had born on his shoulder the head of Christ bowed down by sad thoughts; the two nobles, disciples of the master, who, after having helped him to bear his cross, wished to render him also the last offices; and finally the workmen who represent the mass of the people, to whom Christ came to bring consolation and hope. They are arranged in pairs in four groups, with a symmetry that might seem to have been intentional, and yet so naturally that this regular arrangement is only observed when the composition is analysed. They walked side by side in Christ's life; side by side they continue to serve him after his death.

More than one *Descent from the Cross* , as we have said, had been painted before Rubens, and he certainly knew the works of his predecessors, in particular that of Daniele di Volterra, that painter's master-piece, in the church of the Holy Trinity in Rome. But none of these previous pictures show so happy an arrangement of the groups, so much unity of sentiment and action, so searching an effect produced by such natural means. We cannot imagine the *Descent from the Cross* otherwise than as Rubens conceived it; he discovered the unforgettable, unchangeable and definitive form under which, as in a melodious and touching dirge, this final episode of the Passion was to be celebrated.

There are several reduced replicas of the central panel in existence. They differ from the original work in several points, unimportant in themselves, but interesting as constituting deliberate modifications of the great picture; the different form, for instance, given to the hand of the Christ which falls on his right leg, or the way in which Mary Magdalen is holding the Saviour's foot in these reductions of the original work. It may be admitted that these modifications were Rubens's own doing, and executed under his direction. We know two of these replicas in Antwerp, one in the Museum, the other in the possession of the Tessaro family.

The left shutter of the *Descent from the Cross*  represents the *Visit of the Virgin to St Elizabeth* . On the threshold of the house, which is approached by steps and supported by an open vault, stands Mary, her face inprinted with virginal grace, wearing the brilliantly coloured clothes that Rubens usually gave her: a red robe over a blue robe, which in this picture is slightly raised in front and shows a brown lining. A wide-brimmed straw hat shades her face. She is a little uneasy, and lowers her eyes timidly as she listens to the congratulations of her cousin, who is pointing with a significant gesture to the lap of one who will shortly be a mother. A young servant is coming up the steps behind Mary, carrying a wicker basket on her head; the girlish figure is full of youthful grace. The little house-dog



THE VISIT OF THE VIRGIN -- Left shutter of  
the Descent from the Cross · (Cathedral, Antwerp).

welcomes the visitor with angry barks. Joseph, who has reached the threshold at the same time as Mary, is saluted by Zacharias. We only see the heads of the two men; of the little servant and Elizabeth only half appears within the frame. In front of the vault which supports the threshold and beyond it, lies the court, where a pair of fowls and a peacock are picking up food. In the background is a sky of dull blue with light clouds floating in it. The scene is one of domestic life, seen in the country somewhere in the south; a simple family visit paid and received by people of modest station, who are glad to see each other in happy circumstances. The graceful figures of Mary and the little servant, which dominate the whole, add charm to this rustic simplicity. Rubens thought it due to the monumental character of his work to place this touching scene in grand surroundings, and he has given Elizabeth an Italian palace for a house, showing us its entrance supported by a vault and sheltered by a porch borne on a Tuscan colonnade; the building is of grey-brown marble. It is true that above this porch he has put a trellised vine, and hung the vault under the entrance with ivy, but the academic grandeur of the house has lost nothing by that. From the point of view of painting the shutter is a gem. The restrained, delicate and harmonious tones, lit by a sweet light, without a single note of loudness or straining after effect, give these good people an incomparable charm. Mary is a little saint in every-day dress, among her own people and surrounded by the sympathy of men and things.

We have said already that Rubens had painted the same subject during his



residence in Rome. In essential features the shutter of the « Descent from the Cross » reproduces the panel in the Borghese Gallery, though several difference of detail may be remarked between them. In the earlier of the two pictures we see the whole of both the servant and Elizabeth, to whom Rubens, as here also, gave the features of his mother; Zacharias is there standing behind Mary and holding out his hand to Joseph who is coming up the steps. St Elizabeth is shaking hands with Mary. There are differences also in the execution. In the later work, the colour is much better blended than in the earlier.

Besides the picture in the Borghese Gallery there is a sketch for the shutter in the collection of Prince Giovanelli at Venice. The differences to be remarked between this sketch and the great picture are many in number, but of little importance. We will only mention that there is a donkey standing under the vault beneath the entry, while on the shutter there are two fowls and a peacock. Mary's dress appears again in the engraving Rubens had made after the subject treated on the shutter of the « Descent from the Cross », but the engraving differs in more than one point from the final picture and is more like that in the Borghese Gallery.

On the right shutter is the « Presentation of the Infant Jesus in the Temple ». Here the style is more exalted. The scene takes place in the sanctuary, and the round-arched vault and round or square pillars with Corinthian capitals in marble of various kinds fill the whole background with their majestic lines and varied colours. In front stands the high-priest Simeon, clothed in a scarlet robe, with a red cap on his head and his shoulders covered with a tippet,



THE DEDICATION IN THE TEMPLE — Right shutter of the « Descent from the Cross » (Cathedral, Antwerp).



richly embroidered in gold. He is raising the infant in his arms and lifting his eyes to heaven in a transport of gratitude. Mary is holding out her hands to the child, as if she were afraid the priest would let him fall. She is a youthful figure dressed in a blue cloak and a red robe. Joseph is kneeling in the foreground and holding a small basket which contains a pair of doves. He is completely enveloped in a robe of peacock-blue which only shows a strip of white linen at elbows and neck. In the background, between Simeon and Mary, may be seen in brownish twilight the kindly face of the prophetess Anna, probably a portrait of Rubens's mother. On the right near the edge are two heads of young girls; on the left two men's heads, one of which, touching the edge of the painting, is the portrait of Nicolas Rockox, dean of the Harquebusiers. The whole forms a simple group, treated in a decorative way and charming chiefly by its rich colour and the play of light on the pillars and under the vaulted roof.

The sketch for this shutter is in the collection of Prince Giovanelli, and shows no difference worth mentioning from the picture in the church of Notre-Dame. But when Rubens had it engraved afterwards by Pontius, he modified it considerably; he kept the four principal figures, but instead of the men's heads behind Simeon, he put a priest enveloped in an ample cloak that covers even his head, and a young Levite holding a torch surrounded with flowers. On the opposite side, the two heads of young girls are replaced by a woman carrying a child in her arms and another enveloped in a drapery, which also covers her head.

On the backs of the two shutters Rubens painted the legend of St Christopher and the hermit; the Christ-bearer is on the left, the hermit on the right. When the shutters were closed, the two figures formed a single group. Christopher is a giant, completely nude with the exception of a white linen cloth round the middle of his body and a red drapery raised behind. He stands full face, carrying the child Jesus astride on his shoulder. The child is small and graceful, but the giant's back is bent under the weight and he seems on the point of sinking. His brown skin forms a luminous spot in the nocturnal darkness of the picture. His left hand is placed on his hip; in the right he holds a staff as heavy as a club. He is fording the river, in which less water than one might expect is visible between the shell-covered bank in the foreground and the brown line made by the setting sun on the horizon. The colossal form of Christopher is broadly treated, and there is something imposing in the powerful, dark figure; the back of the shutters is treated with less moderation and more according to the earlier manner than the face of triptych.

We have recently seen at M. Sedelmeyer's in Paris, a replica of much smaller dimensions. The figure of St Christopher is here treated with much more detail and looks like enamel; the rest is lightly touched. It is more than a sketch, it is really a finished picture in miniature. The sketch for St Christopher is in the Pinakothek at Munich; painted with breadth and precision, it is a fine fragment, which shows more subtle effects of light than the great picture, and resembles and surpasses the « Flight into Egypt » in the Cassel Museum, which, like itself, is painted in the manner of Elsheimer.

It appears that this large naked figure, though there was nothing indecent about it, was very displeasing to their Reverences the chapter of Antwerp; for on the 18<sup>th</sup> July, 1614, four days before they appeared at the great banquet organized by the Guild of the Harquebusiers to celebrate the completion of their altar, the canons held a meeting to deliberate on the consecra-

tion of the altar. On this occasion they resolved to delegate two of their number to negotiate with the bishop concerning the solemn inauguration and the opportunity there would be of having the figure of St Christopher altered, since his nudity might give offence. It is nowhere said that the bishop sided with their opinion, or that any modification was proposed to Rubens.

The triptych of the « Descent from the Cross » stands in the cathedral at Antwerp, a few steps from that of the « Elevation of the Cross »; and thus it is easy to determine the profound transformation that had come over the manner of Rubens in the transition between one work and the other. It is highly probable that this evolution in his manner of conceiving men and things was favoured by the choice of the subject in which it becomes manifest for the first time. Having to represent a more peaceful and touching scene, he must have felt himself naturally impelled to adopt a calmer, sweeter and more human tone than when he had to portray the violent action of the executioners. But whatever the reason that led him to adopt this new manner, he remained faithful to it for many years.

The « Descent from the Cross » was left in its original position till 1794; then it was carried off by the commissioners of the French Republic and exhibited in the Louvre. In 1815 it was brought back, cleaned by van Regemorter, and, like the « Elevation of the Cross », entrusted by king William to the cathedral. After May, 1816, it occupied the place where it may now be seen. In 1623 it had been cleaned for the first time by Rubens's pupils, whose entire salary from the Guild consisted of eight pots of beer; in 1728 it was cleaned again by Jacobus Vercammen, and in 1750 and 1760 by the elder Beschey. In 1847 a commission was appointed for the purpose of examining the condition of this picture and of the « Elevation of the Cross ». The conclusions of its report were reassuring in general, but a complete restoration was considered necessary to remedy the slight deterioration it had suffered and prevent its increase. In 1854 M. Etienne Le Roy was entrusted with the work and finished it to the general satisfaction in 1856.

The « Descent from the Cross » had a great success, and requests reached Rubens from all parts for reproductions and especially from different towns in French Flanders. He did not resist these entreaties; the subject attracted him; he found it fruitful and susceptible of variations. After creating the « Elevation of the Cross », he had refrained from further treatment of the subject of this perfect and final master-piece. In this case, on the contrary, he allowed himself to be persuaded to carry out modified interpretations of the same scene. And he set to work to displace, to reverse and transform; he went on producing artistic and estimable works, but never again did either he or any other attain to the realisation of a form that could be compared with the ravishing interpretation of the sublime act of devotion and love that he had created for the altar of the Harquebusiers.

He painted new interpretations while he was still at work on the triptych, or very soon afterwards. The only one on the creation of which we have any information is the retable of the church of St Omer in the north of France (*Œuvre*. No 315). A manuscript chronicle preserved in the public library of that town relates as follows: « In the same month (December, 1612) » the altar of the chapel of St John the Evangelist in the church of St Omer was restored, and over it was placed a picture of flat painting, portraying the descent of Our Lord Jesus

» Christ from the cross, and it was said that it cost two hundred and 50 florins in Antwerp, » without reckoning the cost of bringing it here, and then the carpenter and the image-carver — had five hundred florins ».

Unfortunately the picture has been very much damaged ; its low price implies that Rubens did not spend much work on it. In its essential parts the subject is treated as in the Antwerp » Descent from the Cross ». At the top one of the workmen is leaning over the cross and



THE DESCENT FROM THE CROSS (Museum, Lille).

holding Christ by the arm ; two others stand on the ladder and hold the Saviour, who is lying on the shroud which is passed under his chest. The body has slipped nearly to the ground, so that the kneeling Magdalen is able to embrace both legs in her arms, and Mary, who is also kneeling, is able to draw towards her the arm that hangs free. John is standing and supporting his master's chest. Is this a first version of the subject, abandoned by Rubens as a not very happy one, and executed by a pupil after his sketch ? or is it a reproduction he had made, into which he has introduced important modifications of deliberate purpose, so as not to send anything elsewhere that might resemble a replica of the masterpiece of Antwerp ? The date given in the document quoted above argues for the first supposition ; so does the fact that the composition is very far indeed from successful. The group which, in the Antwerp picture, surrounds the beloved with a circle of care and love, is completely broken here ; workmen and friends are accomplishing a

purely material task and accomplishing it in a very unsatisfactory manner.

A second variation, in the St Petersburg Museum, dates from 1613 or 1614 (*Œuvre*. No 312). Three ladders rest against the cross with three friends of Christ mounted on them : Joseph of Arimathaea, who is leaning very far forward and holding the Saviour by the shoulder ; St John, who supports his back, and Nicodemus, who is holding him up and has placed the arm of the corpse over his shoulder. Mary, standing by the side of the cross, clasps her son in her arms ; Mary Magdalen has seized Christ's hanging arm in both her hands. The composition is full of unity, the colour is rich and carefully thought out, and this « Descent from the Cross » is the best after that at Antwerp, while still being far inferior to that master-piece. The painting is harder and coarser ; the attitude of the body, which is descending in a stiff line with scarcely any play in it, is far from happy. Rubens himself painted the Christ and the shroud, and the head



of Mary ; the rest was executed by a talented pupil and retouched by the master. The picture was painted for the church of the Capuchins at Lier, where it was placed over the altar on the right of the choir. On the invasion by the forces of the French Republic it was hidden ; later it became the property of the Empress Josephine, and was bought by the Emperor of Russia in 1814.

There is a replica of this picture with slight modifications in the cathedral at Arras (*Œuvre*. N<sup>o</sup> 313). It formerly adorned the church of St Gery in the same town, to which it was presented in 1650 by an inhabitant of Arras, Jan Widebien, and Maria de Douai, his wife. In 1792, the church was pulled down and the retable placed in the cathedral. It is now completely spoiled. The fact that the anonymous engraver of the school of Rubens, who engraved the unsuccessful plate published by Nic. Lauwers, took this picture for his model and not that at Lier proves that it was formerly thought more of than might be supposed from its present condition.

Another church in Arras, St John the Baptist's, has a third version (*Œuvre*. N<sup>o</sup> 314). The four figures who are taking Christ down from the cross form a meagre setting, insufficient to accomplish the task properly. The Christ is sharply bent ; his body sinks, broken. The gesture of the Virgin, who is holding up her hands to support her son, whose arm she has placed over her shoulder, has something touching in it. Mary Magdalen, much moved, raises her arms to heaven with a violent movement. The picture is rather later in date, and was painted for the church of St Vast at Arras.

These is a fourth interpretation in the Museum at Lille (*Œuvre*. N<sup>o</sup> 311). The body of Christ is bent far back and ungraceful in attitude. As he descends, his chest is uppermost, his head falls over his shoulder, and his hair is thrown entirely to one side. On the other hand, the action of Mary Magdalen, who is kissing in transports the hand of the beloved, is very fine, and so is that of Mary who is raising her eyes towards her son, as if to question him, and laying her hand on his arm with maternal tenderness and anxiety. The picture, which has been cleaned, is clear in tone and brilliant in colouring, and produces an excellent impression. Rubens himself painted the Christ and the shroud ; the Magdalen, with her bright drapery and a splendid play of light on her fair hair, is also mainly the master's work, and so are the two women, one old and the other young, placed behind her ; the other figures have been retouched by him. The picture dates from about 1615 ; the figures were painted after the same models as those in the « Descent from the Cross » at Antwerp. It was formerly over the high altar of the church of the Capuchins at Lille. In the sketch, which is also in the Museum at Lille, and in Clouwet's engraving, the old woman in the background is missing.

In the Museum at Valenciennes there is a fifth and last version (*Œuvre*. N<sup>o</sup> 306). One of the assistants is astride on the arm of the cross, and holds the band of cloth that supports the chest of the Christ. The body is bent in an ungraceful way, with the legs hanging vertically. Here again one of the workmen has thrown one of the ends of the shroud over his shoulder. The picture was painted about 1615 for the church of Notre-Dame de la Chaussée at Valenciennes. When the building was destroyed under the first Republic, the picture was taken to the church of St Gery, which sold it to the Museum in 1866. It has been much injured by unskilful retouching and restoration.

The different interpretations of the subject which had inspired the artist with one of his

master-pieces, were executed, therefore, within a very short space of time, and almost contemporaneously with the Antwerp triptych. In none of these pictures do we find the great unity and the perfect harmony, who distinguish the original work to such a high degree; the bond that unites the various helpers is broken, the group of them is scantier and their action not so well combined.

It is not only in composition, but in execution also that the *Descent from the Cross* at Antwerp surpasses the others. The first is painted entirely by his own hand, the rest only partially so. The *St Omer* and the *Arras* pictures are so much injured that we no longer have the means of telling what they might have been; but we can see enough to be right in stating that they were painted, like the others, by pupils of Rubens after the master's sketches, and more or less retouched by him, which sufficiently explains their inferiority. All the imperfections of the later versions are shown in the strongest light by comparison with the magnificent and faultless master-piece that preceded them. And yet, taken all together, they give a striking proof of the fertility of invention of Rubens's brain, which treated the same subject six times and varied it every time.

THE STORY OF JOB. — In the same year in which he finished the *Descent from the Cross*, he began the triptych of the *Story of Job*, which the Guild of Musicians, whose patron was Job, had ordered of him for their altar in the church of *St Nicholas* at Brussels (*Œuvre*, No 129). The picture excited great admiration in the seventeenth century. Tradition declares that the Archduke Albert offered 4000 florins for it and the Grand-duke Ferdinand of Tuscany as many as 30,000, without persuading the confraternity to part with it.

Unfortunately it was destroyed during the bombardment of Brussels in 1695. All our knowledge of it is derived from extracts from the registers of the Guild, and the mention made of it in old manuscripts, and from a couple of engravings and as many pictures painted after one of them.

Documents inform us that the work was ordered in 1612, at a price of 1500 florins, of which Rubens received a first instalment of 150 florins in 1613; in each of the three following years he received the same amount. In 1617 and 1619 he received 300 florins, and in 1620 and 1621 two further sums of 150 florins.

The centre panel represented Job on his ash-heap, scraping his sores with a potsherd. His wife stands before him and reproaches him with his misfortunes; his three friends endeavour to console him. On one of the shutters are three demons engaged in tormenting Job; one is beating him with serpents, another threatening him with a burning torch, the third is pulling his hair, raising him up and striking him with a rope. His wife looks on at the scene and adds the torture of her insults to those inflicted by the demons. On the other shutter we see Job receiving from a messenger the news of the loss of his goods. The backs of the shutters represented Job returned to his dominion. He is standing at the door of his palace; on one side several children are being led to him and on the other they are bringing him fruits.

The centre panel was clumsily engraved by Kraft after a drawing by Horst, which does not seem to be accurate. The first shutter gave Lucas Vorsterman the model of an excellent plate, which he engraved after a drawing or a painting in which the composition was modified.

The Munich Pinakothek and the salle Lacaze in the Louvre each have a copy of this shutter, probably painted after Vorsterman's engraving.

Tradition has it that in the church of Wezemael, a village near Louvain, there was another picture also representing the « Story of Job ». And indeed we know an engraving, which appears to have been made after a picture by Rubens, where St Job is being beaten by demons with serpents, while his wife upbraids him and a friend consoles him. The engraving has the inscription *S<sup>t</sup> Job propheta Wesemaliensis ecclesiae patronus* (St Job, prophet, patron of the church of Wezemael).

MONUMENTAL PICTURES. — THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST. — Before the « Descent from the Cross » had been taken from Rubens's studio, he painted a picture to adorn the mausoleum of Jan Moretus, the father of his friend Balthasar (*Œuvre*. Nos 334-339). Jan Moretus had married the second daughter of the celebrated Christophe Plantin, and had succeeded his father-in-law in the direction of the press in 1589. He died on the 22<sup>nd</sup> September, 1610. Shortly afterwards Rubens accepted the task of painting a triptych to adorn the tombs of himself and his wife. The order was given through his friend Balthasar Moretus, with whom he came to an agreement on the price, the choice of subject and the form of the mausoleum. The picture was painted in 1611; on the 27<sup>th</sup> April, 1612, it was finished and paid for. On that day Rubens signed a receipt in this form :

« I the undersigned acknowledge the receipt from S<sup>r</sup> Balthasar Moretus of the sum of six » hundred florins in payment for the monumental picture for his late father, painted by » me. In witness whereof I have written and signed this quittance with my hand, the 27<sup>th</sup> April, 1612.

PIETRO PAUOLO RUBENS. »

The triptych was placed in the second chapel in the circumference of the apse in the church of Our Lady at Antwerp; it consists of a central panel representing the « Resurrection of Christ », and two shutters, one with St John the Baptist and the other the Virgin Mary; on the backs of the shutters are two angels in grisaille, with their hands on the ring of a door, as if about to open it.

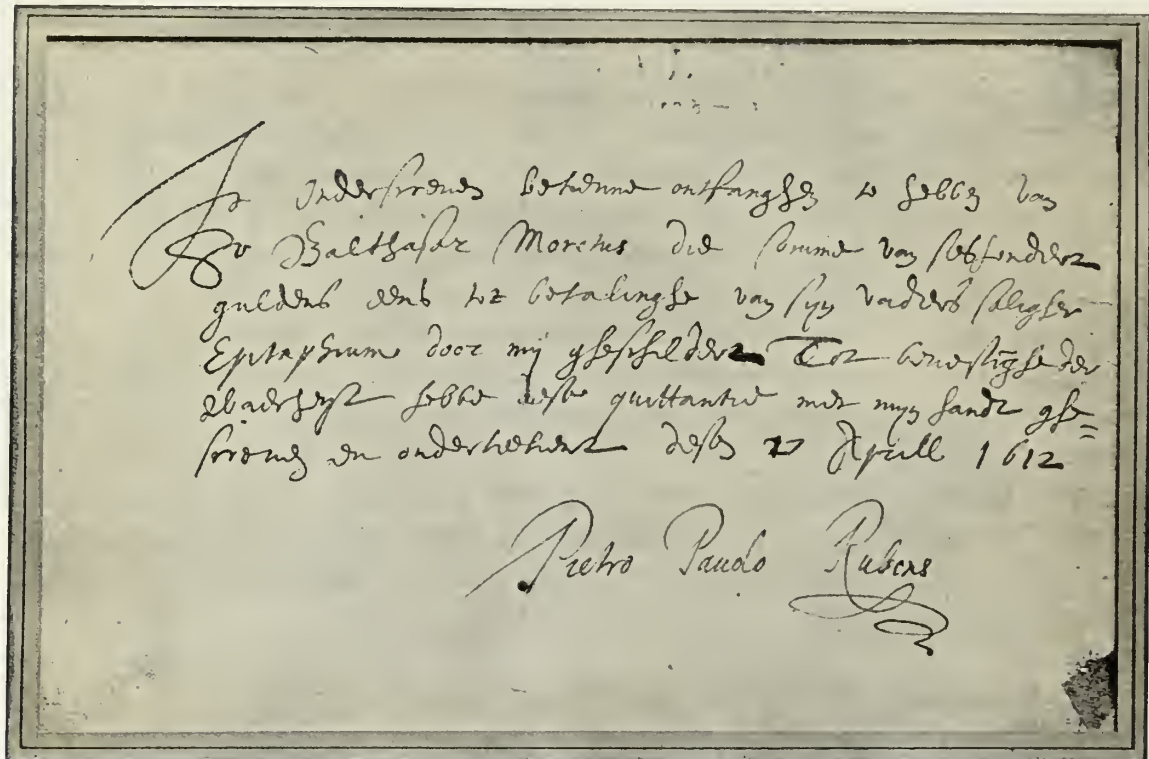
The picture was originally surrounded with sumptuous decoration. On the floor of the chapel stood a tomb adorned with festoons and ornamented with an urn; by the side of the tomb were two decorated pilasters and two large conchs; above it were two lamps, two cartouches and a sculptured frieze. The portrait of Jan Moretus borne by two angels was placed in the frieze. The sculptures cost no less than 860 florins. 270 florins were paid to the gilder, and 87 florins 12 stuivers for the copper plate and engraved epitaph. The monument was pulled down in 1794 by order of the commissioners of the French Republic and sold for 6 florins; at the same time the triptych was taken to Paris. It came back in 1815 and was restored to the Moretus family, who returned it to its old place in the church of Our Lady, to remain there for ever. The portrait of Jan Moretus which crowned it was also replaced above the new marble frame which the family had made in 1819.

The subject was indicated naturally. Christ, rising from the tomb, symbolised the resurrection of all men; the patron saints of Jan Moretus and his wife called the deceased



to memory. The centre panel represents Christ springing from the tomb with one foot on the edge. In his left hand he holds the long shaft of a banner that floats above his head; in his right a palm, symbolising, like the banner, victory over death, and on this hand also falls the white shroud which descends from the shoulder to the waist.

A radiant glory encircles his fair head, and the calmness of his sweet and gracious features contrasts with the trouble and terror of the scene. Round the glory hang clouds or hover the



RECEIPT FOR THE PICTURE FOR THE TOMB OF JAN MORETUS (Plantin-Moretus Museum, Antwerp).

heads of angels. On the horizon gleams the first light of dawn. In the foreground and in the cave of the sepulchre darkness still reigns, but half scattered by the light that emanates from the newly risen. In the narrow space on the left of Christ's feet are Roman soldiers in agitation, seized with astonishment and dismay; three of them are still lying down, three have sprung up; some are looking in consternation at the miracle that is proceeding, and the others are turning their heads away in terror.

The painting still belongs to Rubens's first manner. The heavy shadows in the foreground, the prominent muscles in the shoulder of the soldier low down in the foreground, and the dry handling of the men standing up, and especially of the Roman in a helmet with a face blanched with terror, recall the « Elevation of the Cross », while the firm sharp drawing of the little clouds that float in the hard blue sky recall those in the « Dispute of the Holy Sacrament ». The unity in the painting, and the warm, fat glow on the chest of Christ mark the transition towards the Christ of the « Descent from the Cross » and the « Unbelief of St Thomas ».

On the left shutter stands St John the Baptist wrapped in a sheepskin; he is looking towards the principal panel and lifting his hand as if he too were struck by the miraculous spectacle. On the right is St Martina; she holds a palm in one hand, and with the other raises the pale violet drapery thrown over her red robe. By her side stands a broken pedestal, behind her are the ruins of an ancient building, recalling the facts related in the Lives of the Saints. St Martina, martyr, was taken by the Emperor's orders to the temple of Apollo, to make sacrifice there to the god; but when, instead of obeying, she made the sign of the cross, the idol fell from its pedestal, and part of the temple fell in ruins.

Dark tones equally prevail in the shutters. The painting is finished but timid. St Martina is draped like an antique statue and has the attitude of one; and, in fact, the same figure was engraved by Schelte a Bolswert, under the name of St Barbe, and by Lucas Vorsterman under the name of St Catherine. Below the latter plate, the engraver expressly states that he took it from an antique statue.

THE UNBELIEF OF ST. THOMAS. — When Rubens had put the finishing touches to the *Descent from the Cross*, his friend Nicolas Rockox commissioned him for another important work, a triptych intended to be placed over the tomb of himself and his wife Adriana Perez (*Œuvre*, No 346-350). Rockox was born on the 14<sup>th</sup> December, 1560, and died on the 12<sup>th</sup> December, 1640. His wife died on the 22<sup>nd</sup> September, 1619. He took time by the forelock, therefore, in seeing that no one but Rubens should paint his monumental picture. The triptych was placed over the altar of the chapel of Our Lady in the church of the Récollets. Rockox had a particular liking for this church, which was situated in his neighbourhood, and in which the members of several notable families had had their tombs constructed. The churches of the Franciscans had formerly the privilege of being chosen by people of distinction for their last homes. The picture remained there till the time of the French Revolution, when the invaders carried it off to Paris. In 1815 it was returned to us and presented to the Antwerp Museum.

It consists of a principal panel, the *Unbelief of St Thomas*, and two shutters, the left showing the portrait of Nicolas Rockox, and the right that of Adriana Perez. The arms of the pair are painted on the backs of their portraits; in the upper left-hand corner of the left shutter is the date 1615; but on looking up at the figures from below we observe that the last was formerly a 3, and that the original date was 1613. I can find no explanation of this double date,



NICOLAS ROCKOX  
(Museum, Antwerp).

except the supposition that Rubens had finished the portrait of Nicolas Rockox and perhaps that of his wife in 1613, and then put the original date, which he altered two years later on the completion of the principal panel.

The portrait of Rockox is one of the best Rubens ever painted. The burgomaster of Antwerp is represented almost in profile. He is bareheaded and wears a ruff, a doublet fastened over the chest by means of a row of little gold buttons, and a black cloak trimmed with marten fur. His right hand lies on his chest close to the buttons; in his left is a prayer-book. His hair and beard are short, thin, and dark. His features are regular, his nose pointed, his mouth a little receding, his lips thin and closely shut. His eyes are wide open and look straight before him. His forehead is high and regularly curved. The tone of his clothes is sober, so that his plump hand stands out vividly on his chest. A little lower down, the gilded edges and red velvet binding of the little prayer-book and the pale flesh at the tips of his fingers strike a lively note of colour. The head is painted in well blended tones lit by a sweet light, and it says calmly and with precision what the painter wished it to say. He intended to represent a very distinguished man, with the shrewdness that befits a magistrate and the quick intelligence of a man of wide interests in government, politics, letters and fine arts. The portrait of Rockox might serve as a specimen of Rubens's manner in this branch during his early years. He always liked men of healthy bodies and minds, and gave these qualities to his sitters so far as truth would allow. His portraits are painted from nature and are very individual and full of life. He does not lend them, as Vandyck did, an air of lofty distinction, but he gives them something of his own mighty spirit and warm blood, and does all he can to make them robust beings. Like his other portraits of this period, his Rockox is conceived with prudence and moderation; later, matter was to be more dominant. The flesh became more supple and more exuberant at the expense of the interest taken in the sitter's inner life; here the artist has taken more pains to give the character of his model, and the mental rather than the material life finds expression in the delicate features of the face.

Rubens painted his friend Rockox once again in the declining days of both. The picture is lost, and we only know it from the engraving by Pontius, dated 1639 (*Œuvre*, No 1035).

The portrait of Adriana Perez is much inferior; she was not so good a subject, and Rubens took little trouble to make her interesting. His brown hair taken up in stiff bandeaux is covered by a little black hood, the round edge of which hangs over her forehead; there is a slight cast in her eyes, and her insignificant features are those of a woman of no great intellectual capacity. Her hands, which are hard and pale, hold a rosary of red coral beads. The portraits of husband and wife were intended to be placed in a church; and both therefore are represented in prayer. But in the man's case, religious observances are evidently accessory, and his spirit turns chiefly to the things of this world; to the woman prayer is a most important matter, and she engages in it with more fervour.

The centre panel represents Christ with three of his apostles, St John, St Thomas and a third, whose name cannot be given for certain. All four figures are seen from the knees upward. Christ is bare to the waist, with a pale red drapery which he carries over his left arm, and some white linen showing slightly above the drapery over his thigh. One of the Saviour's hands is raised, the other is half-open and turned so as to show the wounds. The lines of his face, which is seen



in profile, are regular. His auburn hair falls to his neck, and his young, silky beard is of the same shade; the expression of his face is gentle and combines with the softness of his features to give the head an air of dulness and sufficiency which is particularly enervating. His chest and arms are not exceptionally robust, but they proclaim blooming health; the figure is that of a man who never suffered nor toiled, or one whose body has been completely renewed by the resurrection, which has effaced all trace of weariness or trouble. The flesh is firm and the skin velvety; the yellowish and luminous tints mingled with the rosy complexion give him an appearance of brilliant freshness. Over the prevailing tones the modelling is indicated by tints of blue gray. The sweet and luminous tones are so blended as to represent plump flesh without muscles or bones. The edges of the chest and arms are marked by light brownish shadows, on which the red drapery throws red reflections; the neck and other parts, which these reflections do not reach, have the gloss and the incandescent gleam that Rubens used, especially at this period, to make his shadows transparent. The centre of the composition is Christ with his nude torso. Rubens wished to make him the faultless model, not of academic beauty in general, but of Flemish beauty, well-nourished, with rich, soft flesh under a white skin. That being so, his God-man has little of the divine; he is a handsome, well-made man, but nothing more. The same may be said of the apostles; they show respectively the heads of a fair young man, an old man, and a man of mature age with curly auburn hair. The most lively figure is that of the aged St Thomas, who is looking at the wounds with a defiant expression; the St John is a credulous man, who believes what he is told without examination, and wonders in complete confidence; the third is only a super. All three are living models with just enough movement to prevent their being wooden. Their hair and beards are finished and treated with a detail that reaches the separate indication of every hair, which is one of the characteristics of Rubens at this period. The hands of Christ and St John are fine and closely treated; the beloved disciple has long, delicate fingers with the tapering ends which Rubens was fond of giving his characters.

The *Unbelief of St Thomas* has too little intrinsic worth to justify description at length, but the picture is interesting because it may be regarded as the most striking piece of evidence of the morbid crisis through which Rubens was passing at this time. He broke with his predilection for the browns of Italy, and began to paint pale, light pictures; hard and prominent muscles have given place to a preference for fat, smooth flesh. He had returned, at any rate in his large religious paintings, to the manner that preceded his travels in Italy. But he was not slow to perceive that he had fallen into a worse exaggeration than that against which he wished to react, and he soon returned to a more healthy, manly and robust art.

CHRIST ENTRUSTING HIS FLOCK TO ST PETER. — About the same time as the *Unbelief of St Thomas*, Rubens painted the *Christ entrusting his flock to St Peter* (*Euvre*. N° 351), which adorned the monumental altar of Nicolas Damant in the chapel of the Holy Sacrament in the church of St Gudule at Brussels. Nicolas Damant, as we learn from his epitaph, was a knight, decorated with the gold medal by the king of Spain, Viscount of Brussels, lord of Ottignies, Bauwel and Olmen, formerly president of the council of Flanders and afterwards Chancellor of Brabant. Under Philip II he was president of the council of the Netherlands in

Spain, and on his return he became president of the council of State to Albert and Isabella. He died on the 27<sup>th</sup> July, 1616; his wife, Barbe Brant, had died at Madrid on the 6<sup>th</sup> August, 1591. At the time of the French Revolution the committee of the fabric sold the picture, which afterwards went to England, where it now forms part of the Wallace Museum in London.

Christ is pointing out the sheep which he is entrusting to St Peter, and handing him the keys of the church. The chief of the apostles bows his head and kisses the Saviour's hand; three others, among whom we may recognise St John, are standing behind St Peter. Christ,



THE UNBELIEF OF ST THOMAS (Museum, Antwerp).

St Peter and St John are painted after the models who sat for the *Unbelief of St Thomas*. The tone is warm; the red cloak of one of the apostles forms a most brilliant central point, and casts reflexions on the hands of Christ and the face of St Peter. The composition is very simple, and cost the painter very little trouble. Its resemblance to the *Unbelief of St Thomas* shows that the picture was painted shortly after 1615, probably in 1616, the year of Nicolas Damant's death. The execution is Rubens's own, and is more vigorous than that of the *Unbelief of St Thomas*; but it also is smooth, empty and mawkish.

#### CHRIST GIVING THE KEYS TO PETER. —

A picture painted in the same manner and probably at the same time, was one which Jan Breughel placed over his father's tomb

in the church of la Chapelle at Brussels. It represents « Christ giving the keys to Peter » (*Œuvre*. No 258). Rubens was assisted in the execution by his pupils, and this diminishes the value of the work; but the figure of St Peter is extremely brilliant in colour. The picture belonged in late years to M. Potemkin, Russian minister at Brussels, and afterwards to M. Valentin Roussel, at Roubaix. On the 14<sup>th</sup> June, 1899, when this amateur's collection was put to auction, the picture was sold at Brussels. In 1901 it belonged to M. Sedelmeyer of Paris.

ALTAR-PIECES AND OTHER SACRED PICTURES. — Besides the various « Descents from the Cross » and the triptych of « Job », several other retables were ordered of Rubens during the first years that followed his return home. One of the first was, no doubt, the « Conversion of St Bavon » (*Œuvre*. No 396), which was intended for the high altar of the church of that saint at Ghent. Rubens had made the sketch for this picture in 1612; it was ordered by the bishop of Ghent, Charles Maes, and was not finished till 1624.

In 1614 he painted the pictures which were formerly in the church of the Reformed Carmelites at Brussels (*Œuvre*. Nos 494-496). The church had been finished in that year, and it

was probably on that occasion that it was presented with this work by Rubens, which had been ordered, it is said, by the duke de Bournonville, and represented « St Teresa kneeling before Christ ». Under the great retable were two small pictures representing « St Teresa kneeling before the Holy Spirit », and the « Burial of St Catherine ». The large picture was taken from the church in 1795 and carried to England. In 1814 it was sold in London at the La Hante sale. The two predellas had been given before this by the monks in payment to a painter who had done some work for them. The « Burial of St Catherine » was sold at Dordrecht at the Slingeland sale in 1785 ; in 1830 it belonged to Sir Edward Gray. We have been unable to find any further traces of the other small picture or of the great retable. From the engraving that was made of the latter we gather that it was painted in the manner of the « Unbelief of St Thomas ». Sir Joshua Reynolds bears witness that « the angels are not very angelical : the head of the saint is finely drawn and painted ; the Christ is likewise well drawn for Rubens ; but the effect is rather hard, proceeding from its being wrought up too highly : it is smooth as enamel, which takes off that suppleness which appears in his other works ».


To the same time and the same kind of work belongs the triptych of the « Martyrdom of St George » (*Œuvre*. Nos 438-440), painted for the altar of the Arbalestiers in the church of St Gommarius at Lier. It is an unimportant work, painted by a pupil and retouched by the master. The principal panel was taken by the commissioners of the French Republic and given in 1803 to the Bordeaux Museum, where it still remains. The shutters, which represented « St George and the Dragon », and « St Agnes with a lamb », belonged in 1830 to Sir Edward Gray, and were bought by Mr. Vernon, who sold them to M. Nieuwenhuys. The present owner we do not know.



Five other retables belong to the same period. The first is « Religion triumphing over Paganism and Vice » (*Œuvre*. No 384) painted for the cathedral of Freysing in Bavaria and now in the Munich Pinakothek. According to a chronicle of Freysing, the prince-bishop of the town, Ernest of Bavaria, paid 3000 florins for it. The bishop died in 1612, and the picture must date from before that year, and will consequently be the first work painted by Rubens for abroad after his return to Antwerp ; the sketch belongs to consul Weber at Hamburg. Goethe possessed a drawing, now preserved in his house at Weimar, which represents the principal characters in the picture under a more or less modified form (*Œuvre*. No 1454).



Next comes the « Christ on the Cross with Mary, John and Mary Magdalen » (*Œuvre*. No 302) in the Louvre, which was painted for the church of the Jesuits at Bergen-Saint-Winnox. The work is striking for its luminous tone, and the profound sentiment of the characters. Mary, with outstretched hands and clasped fingers and her head turned towards her son, is looking at him with compassion ; Mary Magdalen, who is kneeling at the foot of the cross, is a tenderer soul, unable to resist her tragic emotions ; she is affectionately clasping Christ's feet in her arms, and seems ready to sink with grief and love. It is a scene of dumb suffering, of poignant self-abandonment to grief.

Then we have the « Martyrdom of St Laurence » (*Œuvre*. No 468), painted for the church of la Chapelle at Brussels, and now in the Munich Pinakothek. Rubens there treats the subject which he made use of later for the triptych in the church of St John at Mechlin, where he shows St John thrown backward into a cauldron of boiling oil. Again, there is the « St Francis



of Assisi , receiving the infant Christ from the hands of the Virgin, in the Lille Museum, painted for the church of the Capuchins in that town (*Œuvre*. N° 419). A picture of the same subject, which was executed about the same time for the church of the Capuchins in Antwerp and is still there, is of doubtful authenticity, and in any case of but moderate artistic value (*Œuvre*. N° 420).

This period also saw the painting for the same church of the  Christ between the two Thieves  (*Œuvre*. N° 295) with St John and Mary on one side, two soldiers on the other and St Mary Magdalen at the foot of the cross. The same church also possesses a large copy, and the Antwerp Museum a smaller one. The original picture was taken to Paris in 1794 and given by Napoleon I to the Museum at Toulouse. The church of the Capuchins of Antwerp was built in 1613, and we may suppose that the retable destined for the high altar was finished about the same time, a supposition which the painting of the picture fully bears out.

To judge from the works he executed during the first years that followed his return to Antwerp, Rubens had promptly become a painter much in request for altar pictures. He remained in favour till the end of his days. To his century, the following century and in part to the nineteenth century, he was *par excellence* the Catholic painter of the north of Europe; no other has impressed his mark more powerfully on the art of his church. Was he, then, so profoundly religious a spirit? Was he so deeply struck by the loftiness or the mystery of certain dogmas, so moved by the touching aspect of certain stories? We think not. Compared with the conceptions of the mediaeval Italian and Flemish painters, those of Rubens are extremely material: contemplation and mysticism were absolutely foreign to him. In the sacred legends he saw no more than the actions and sentiments of humanity: Mary for him was a real mother, full of tenderness; the little Jesus, a plump and healthy infant; there is no essential difference between his saints and his mythological persons. But he painted large canvases covered with people breathing grace and strength, religious scenes glowing with colour and light, calculated to set a ray of celestial glory shining over the altars of the second Renaissance. He came at a time when the church had renounced the life of peace and contemplation to throw herself into the battle; at a time when there was need of prelates with the energy of his confessor Ophovius, and of saints of Herculean build like his St Peter and St Paul; of mighty warriors like his St George, and dramatic martyrs like his St Liévin. Bishops and abbés no longer went to battle  with sword at side and helmet on head ; but at church in their sermons and in their writings they grappled hand to hand with heresy or set forth to reconquer lost territories. Rubens was the great religious painter of the Catholic revival; his pictures celebrate the battle joined against the dissenting Christians, and the victories won over them. He speaks clearly, without reticence or secret aspiration, he relates with facility, and his stories satisfy the mind no less than they charm the eye. And therefore, in a religion which, since the Council of Trent, had become more rationalistic, better ordered and more methodical, he was called to be the great creator of images in keeping with that religion.

Besides the religious pictures mentioned above, which Rubens painted for altars and tombs, he produced a certain number during this period for other destinations. Among these is the *« Woman taken in Adultery »* (*Œuvre*. N° 256), which passed in 1899 from the Miles collection to the Royal Museum at Brussels; this is one of the productions of his morbid

period. It shows flat tints widely spread, and actions and grouping as dull as the colour. Another is the « Christ with the four Penitents » in the Munich Pinakothek (*Œuvre*. No 381). This picture is warmer in tone, richer in colour and happier in expression than most of the works of this period. The same subject had been treated by Otho Vænius, under a very different form, in a picture which is now in the Museum at Mainz.

The Munich and the Mechlin Museums have each a « Christ on the Cross », of relatively small dimensions, which were painted between 1612 and 1615. The *impasto* is thin and transparent, and both are entirely Rubens's own work (*Œuvre*. Nos 297-298). Both are remarkable for the manner in which Rubens has shaded the flesh; the outlines are a very dark chestnut-brown, and it seems as if the rose-brown light of the setting sun were reflected on the corpse of Christ and mingled with the colour of the blood that flows from the wounds. We have already pointed out that during this period Rubens was fond of brown shadows but nowhere has he been so prodigal of them as here. Obviously, he wished to throw up the pale passages by contrast with these gloomy degradations. These two small pictures, and others of which we shall soon have to speak, prove that Rubens, during these critical years, remained delicate and vigorous in his small panels, and did not show in them the softness which characterises his large canvases of this epoch.

To the series of his small sacred pictures of this period belong also the « Christ on the Cross with St Francis of Assisi » (*Œuvre*. No 305) which forms part of the Liechtenstein Gallery, a second example of the same composition in the Cels collection at Brussels, and a third in Paris at M. Sedelmeyer's. In these pictures we are struck by the passionate love expressed in the action of the saint, who is encircling the cross with one arm while stretching out the other and throwing the upper part of his body backward.

This is the place to mention also the « St Francis of Assisi holding a Crucifix in his arms » in the Oldenbourg Museum (*Œuvre*. No 428) which is rapidly painted, we would gladly say sketched, and proves, like the foregoing, the facility with which Rubens threw off these little pictures, which are so thinly painted that the paint barely covers the panel, but admirable in execution and in sentiment. To him St Francis of Assisi was the highest personification of the love of Christ, and once again in later years he was to take the subject of the blessed monk raised from the earth by his aspirations towards his God, his impulsion towards the Crucified.

The « Return out of Egypt » (*Œuvre*. No 182) was painted about this time, and probably for an altar. Vorsterman engraved it in 1620. In 1708 it was at the castle of Tervueren, and the duke of Marlborough carried it off to England, where it formed part of the valuable collection belonging to his heirs until 1886. It was then sold at auction to Mr. Charles Butler of London. The painting is very pale, with figures sharply outlined, superb in composition but poor in colouring : a pupil's work retouched by the master.

We are better acquainted with the destination of another canvas, the « Virgin with the parrot » in the Antwerp Museum, which was presented to the Guild of St Luke, to adorn its guildhall (*Œuvre*. No 215). In 1598 Rubens had been admitted master in the Corporation of the artists of Antwerp. By his appointment as court-painter on his return to Antwerp he was exempted from all assessments and contributions demanded of the ordinary members. In

compensation for this exoneration he presented the Guild with the picture we have just mentioned, which remained in the possession of the corporation till 1794. It was then sent to Paris. This was the only one of Rubens's paintings which was sent back before 1815 : in 1797 the French government presented it to the central school of drawing which had just been organized at Antwerp.

The Virgin is sitting on a low bench ; with one hand she clasps the neck of the little Jesus and passes her fingers through his curly hair ; the other, which holds a white handkerchief, is lying on her knees. She is looking out of the picture and not thinking of her son. He is entirely nude, and sitting on, or rather leaning against, the bench, with one foot on the ground, his



THE DEAD CHRIST ON THE CROSS  
WITH ST FRANCIS  
(Liechtenstein, Vienna)

legs crossed and an apple in his right hand. St Joseph is a broadly painted figure, which serves to fill the scene and throw up by his dull colours the lively tones of his wife and the boy. On the left is a marble column ; on the projecting base is perched a parrot, which is nibbling at the hanging branches of a vine. Further on is a vista of sky and landscape. The flesh of the Mary and the Jesus is firm, whiter and more luminous in the face of the mother, and softer in the child's body, and without the blueish touches we meet with elsewhere. The shadows are grey, transparent, and mingled with brown tints. This work is superior to those of 1615-1616 in firmness of painting, grace of attitude and fidelity to life. It is a picture of domestic happiness, without the slightest appearance of religious sentiment, where everything is instinct with the peace of the soul, and the happiness of being handsome and healthy and of living in agreeable circumstances. Mary's look is serious, but calm ; she is rather the Holy Virgin than the mother of God. Jesus is a child who knows nought of care and looks out

with a merry and joyful air.

It was thus that Rubens conceived his first Madonna and his first Holy Family ; the mother is young, her eyes are brown, bright and wide open, her nose is delicate and her mouth small ; her red lips are shaped like little angel's wings, her hair is dark brown and her throat full. Later, the flesh was to become plumper and the limbs fuller ; here all is treated with relative sobriety ; the rich forms are rather in the bud than full-blown. The Christ is a splendid boy. Rubens painted many of them, but never one who could give his parents so much joy as this. A babe radiant with beauty was to him the very flower of life. The actions of man might be dramatic, and tragic his destiny and that of woman, but a cloudless sun shines upon their children ; they are the symbols of happiness and grace ; in their playfulness and chubby forms he found an inexhaustible theme.

During these same years Rubens painted several Madonnas ; one of them, the « Madonna holding the Infant Jesus on her lap », belongs to the Museum at St Petersburg (*Œuvre*. No 189), another with St Joseph, St Elizabeth and St John, who is kissing the feet of the infant Jesus, is in the collection of the duke of Devonshire in London (*Œuvre*. No 230). The first is possibly the Madonna with the infant Jesus for which the Archduke paid Rubens 300 florins





Drawing for the Gift of the Shivering Venus (Plattin-Moritz Museum, Antwerp)











on the 13<sup>th</sup> October, 1615 (1). There is a replica of it in the collection of M. Maurice Kann in Paris.

In 1614 Rubens, then dean of the Romanists, presented the brotherhood with two great » effigies painted by his own hand on panels, representing St Peter and St Paul (Œuvre. Nos 482-3). The two pictures were entered in the list of the furniture which every year is



THE HOLY FAMILY (THE VIRGIN WITH THE PARROT) (Museum, Antwerp)

delivered to the newly elected dean ». Mols relates that in his time, about 1770, on the festival of the two saints, these pictures were exhibited at Antwerp over the altar of the church of St George. They disappeared at the time of the French Revolution. All that is known of them since, is that they formed part of the sale of the English collector Mr. Bryan.

He painted his patron-saints again several times. Till the end of the eighteenth century the church of the Capuchins of Antwerp possessed two pictures by him representing St Peter and St Paul, which were engraved by Eynhoudts, but appear to have been of only moderate artistic

(1) A Pietro-Paulo Rubens, pintor, 300 florines, por una pintura de Nuestro-Señora con el niño Jesus. Brusselas, à 13 de ottobre de 1615 (A. PINCHART : *Archives des Arts, Sciences et Lettres*. II, p. 172).

value (*Œuvre*, No 486). They must have been painted about 1615, soon after those which Rubens gave the Romanists. They are proud figures, a little theatrical, but very dignified in attitude and handled with breadth. In one hand St Peter holds a key; with the other he raises a second key to the height of his shoulder. A little angel holding the tiara and the papal sceptre is sitting on his shoulder. St Paul leans both hands on a sword. It is the work of a pupil slightly retouched by the master, but the design is certainly Rubens's and worthy of him. In the collection of Prince Youssopoff, at St Petersburg, we find the two apostles again represented on a single canvas of moderate size (1 ft. 6 in. by 2 ft. 4 in.) Each of them occupies a niche; the colours are the same as in the Munich picture, which has no niches and no angel. The painting is treated in the manner of a sketch, but is sufficiently finished to be able to pass for a picture. It appears to have been done between 1612 and 1614, probably to serve as a model for a larger picture (*Œuvre*, Nos 484<sup>1</sup> and 485<sup>1</sup>).

PICTURES DATED 1613-1614. — We have seen that Rubens had dated the portrait of Nicolas Rockox, and had even put a double date on it. The occurrence is not common. We have seen that he put on the portrait of Brigitta Spinola the inscription *Petro-Paulus Rubens pinxit 1606*; he was afterwards to date four portraits. In 1613-1614 he proved exceptionally communicative; not counting the portrait of Rockox, he dated no less than five works in three years: the « Jupiter and Callisto » in the Cassel Museum (P. P. RVBENS F. 1.6.1.3.), the « Flight into Egypt » also at Cassel, the « Shivering Venus » in the Antwerp Museum, the « Dead Christ mourned by the holy women » in the Museum at Vienna, and the « Susannah and the Elders » in the Stockholm Museum, all four being dated alike (P. P. RVBENS F. 1.6.1.4.). Later we find only two pictures dated by Rubens: a « St Francis » of 1618 and a « Lot leaving Sodom » of 1625.

In the first of the five pictures dated 1613-1614 (*Œuvre*, No 633), we see Callisto, completely nude, sitting with her legs crossed on a red carpet laid on the turf. Her attitude is embarrassed and fearful; she is lifting an amorous, but timid and rather distrustful glance to her strange lover. To seduce the nymph, Jupiter has taken the form of Diana, including the long hair and the breasts. He is kneeling close to Callisto and fixing a loving look upon her. He appears as passionate and daring as she is frightened: with one hand he embraces her neck, the other caresses her chin. The figures are painted by Rubens himself; in the accessories, the eagle, the quiver, and the carpet, he employed the help of a collaborator. We know nothing about the history of this picture, except that it belonged to the duke of Hesse-Cassel in 1749, and since then has remained uninterruptedly in the possession of the same princely family.

The « Shivering Venus » of the Antwerp Museum (*Œuvre*, No 698) represents the goddess crouching on a carpet and a tissue of light gauze. The mother of the loves is cold, and huddles herself together for warmth, with her elbows on her knees and her head in her hands. Her curling fair hair with gold lights, which recalls the splendid locks of the Mary Magdalen in the « Descent from the Cross » at Lille, has come unbound, and she is holding an auburn lock in the hand that supports her head. By her side shrinks Cupid, he too feeling chilly, and tries to cover his head and shoulders with the thin white fabric on which his mother is crouching. A brown-skinned satyr with goat's ears is pointing at Venus and putting out his



tongue at her. He is getting ready to go away, carrying his cornucopia full of grapes, ears of corn and fruits. He is naked, except for the sheepskin over his shoulders.

The well-fleshed Venus concentrates all the interest of the composition upon herself; her back is deliciously modelled and as plump as her legs and thighs, while her face and arms offer a contrast by their firmness. As we have pointed out already, there is a striking resemblance between this figure and the Venus in the « Virtuous Hero » at Dresden. The latter is colder in tone, and has not the luminous browns of the former; but in general the painting is the same, so that we might say that there could not be an interval of ten years between the two pictures, but that they must have been painted at the same period. The picture goes by the name of « Jupiter and Antiope »; but there can be no doubt that the subject is that indicated by the Latin proverb : *Sine Baccho et Cerere friget Venus* (Love grows cold without meat and drink). This work shows the features characteristic of Rubens at this period: well rounded limbs, carefully modelled flesh, pale and smooth tones alternating with light shadows of chestnut-brown penetrated by warm light. Originally the picture was 3 ft. 7 in. wide by 2 ft. 10 in. high. It is now inserted into a landscape of no artistic value, which dates probably from the eighteenth century, and makes it 4 ft. 1 in. high by 5 ft. 6 in. wide.

The second of the pictures bearing the date 1614, is, like that dated 1613, in the Museum at Cassel; it represents the « Flight into Egypt » (*Œuvre*. No 178). In the centre of the composition is Our Lady mounted on the ass and carrying at her breast the infant Jesus, who is asleep. She is completely enveloped in a cloak which also covers her head, and under which she shelters her child. St Joseph walks at her side, leaning on a staff. Behind him comes at a trot a horseman in pursuit of the fugitives, who are accompanied by two angels, one leading the ass by the bridle, while the other points out the way, which crosses a landscape by following the course of a stream. The little panel, which is 1 ft. 3 in. high by 1 ft. 7 in. wide, represents a night scene. In the sky shines the sickle of the new moon, which would not suffice to light the darkness of the way, but for the strong radiance that flows from the infant Jesus to illuminate the scene. Of his picture Rubens has made a perfect gem, a delicate and exquisite miniature. In the supernatural light, the blue, red, and yellow of the drapery stand out with extraordinary brilliance and gleam like enamel in the darkness of the night, while still keeping the delicacy of their tone. It gives the figure of Mary a beauty more than human. The group passes through the profound night like a sweetly luminous vision. The picture has appeared in the catalogue of the Hesse-Cassel Museum since 1749; in 1735 it was sold at Jan van Schuylenburg's sale at The Hague.

It gains great interest, independently of its artistic value, from the fact that Rubens has here imitated one of the little pictures of Adam Elsheimer treating the same subject, which may be seen at the Munich Pinakothek, the Louvre, the Ferdinand Museum at Innsbruck and in the Liechtenstein collection at Vienna. The Louvre also has a copy made after one of Elsheimer's little pictures; it only differs in certain details from the Cassel picture, and is wrongly attributed to Rubens. Elsheimer had a peculiar predilection for nocturnal scenes, in which he rendered faithfully and brilliantly the effects of lunar and stellar light combined with flaming fire. He was born at Frankfort in 1578 and settled in Rome in 1600. It was there that Rubens learned to know and esteem him. In his letter of the 19<sup>th</sup> June, 1622, to Pieter van Veen he speaks of a

process of etching invented and practised by Elsheimer, which no doubt he had learned at Rome in the master's studio, and which consisted in drawing on a copper-plate coated with a white ground. The inventory of his goods includes several little pictures by the German master, and in his nocturnal scenes and those in which he shows the effects of light produced by a bright fire, he is manifestly inspired by the manner of Elsheimer. This is proved not only



THE FLIGHT INTO EGYPT (Museum, Cassel)

in the 'Flight into Egypt', but also in the 'Old Woman warming herself' (*Œuvre*. No 861), in the 'Woman with a candle' (*Œuvre*. No 862) and in the 'Martyrdom of St Laurence' (*Œuvre*. No 468).

The third of the works dated 1614 is a small picture representing the dead Christ mourned by his friends. It is in the Imperial Museum at Vienna. It is a perfect gem; entirely Rubens's work and finished like a miniature. It came from the collection of the Archduke Leopold William and was catalogued as an original Rubens in 1659; then it seems to have been considered too highly finished to be the illustrious master's work, for in later catalogues it is attributed to Eyckens or Eyckmann. In it we see the characters who appear in another picture by the master which is evidently of the same period and belongs to the Antwerp Museum (*Œuvre*. No 324). In the latter the scene is represented more fully. In the background is a wall of



nearly black rock covered with foliage and brushwood, to the left a view of landscape and blue sky, and in the distance the city of Jerusalem. Christ is laid upon straw and on the shroud which covers his loins ; his right leg, which is extended towards the spectator, is foreshortened like that of the Christ in the « Holy Trinity » in the same Museum. St Mary Magdalen is tearing her hair in despair ; the Virgin holds her dead son in her arms and tries to open one of



CHRIST MOURNED BY THE HOLY WOMEN AND ST JOHN (Museum, Antwerp).

his eyes. Three other women and St John are sharing her grief. On the ground lie different objects that have been used for the crucifixion or the washing of the body. The whole is broadly and thickly painted, in bright colours standing out from a dark background ; it is one of the most perfect small pictures that Rubens ever painted. The figures are his, but the landscape and accessories are the work of a collaborator.

The last of the pictures dated 1614 is the « Susannah and the Elders » of the Stockholm Museum (*Œuvre*. N<sup>o</sup> 136), a roughly finished piece, more of a sketch than a picture, and of moderate size, like all the panels that bear that date.

MYTHOLOGICAL SUBJECTS. — Two religions inspired Rubens with his subjects : Christianity and Graeco-Roman Paganism ; the Gospels and Ovid's *Metamorphoses* are the two books which he worked all his life to illustrate by his grand conceptions. Like all his contemporaries



he knew his Bible and the lives of the saints ; but he never gave his mind to the penetration of Christian symbolism ; he had made a loving study of pagan mythology in the works of art and writings of the ancients, and his erudition shows clearly in his compositions.

During the period we are now concerned with, as in all the rest, he drew subjects from this fruitful source. We have already spoken of the « Jupiter and Callisto » and the « Shivering Venus », one dated 1613, the other 1614. The « Faun carrying a basket of fruit » in the Schoenborn Gallery at Vienna (*Œuvre*. N<sup>o</sup> 611), in which the fruit is by Snyder's, and of which there is a replica in the Dresden Museum, must have been painted soon after his return from Italy ; the « Ceres » in the Hermitage Museum at St Petersburg (*Œuvre*. N<sup>o</sup> 582), a splendid figure, which Jan Breughel surrounded with a garland of fruits, and of which M. Philippe de Hambourg has a replica, is a little later, and dates from 1612. Then come the « Diana reposing » in the Hampton Court collection (*Œuvre*. N<sup>o</sup> 600), the « Diana returning from the chase » at Dresden and Darmstadt (*Œuvre*. N<sup>os</sup> 595-597), « Ericthonius in his basket » in the Liechtenstein Gallery (*Œuvre*. N<sup>o</sup> 606), « Nymphs and Fauns » at Oldenbourg (*Œuvre*. N<sup>o</sup> 653), the « Meleager and Atalanta » at Cassel and in the Rodolphe Kann collection (*Œuvre*. N<sup>o</sup> 643), the « Perseus and Andromeda » at Berlin (*Œuvre*. N<sup>o</sup> 665) and the « Venus and Adonis » at St Petersburg and The Hague.

In all these works Rubens shows his delight in the faultless forms which have made the statues of antiquity models of perfect human beauty ; but in one point he departed from the ideal of the ancients and chose his characters from tall, well-fleshed and white-skinned men and fair, plump women, who would have been only imperfectly suitable models for the Greek or Roman sculptors, but were to him the picked representatives of his own race. In choosing them for his favourite types, Rubens gave no very just idea of his own people, among whom were and still are to be found the fragile and thoughtful figures of Memlinc and the unshapely peasants of Pieter Breughel ; but he conceived them under their most beautiful form and their highest originality.

The « Faun with the basket of fruits » shows a striking resemblance to the laughing Faun and drinking Satyr in the Pinakothek at Munich ; the « Ceres with the garland of fruits » recalls the « St Martina » of the « Resurrection », a figure which was painted after a marble statue ; both are more or less faithful imitations of the antique. The nymphs in the « Ericthonius » are soberly treated, and light and pleasant in colour ; they are closely related to the « Drunken Hercules » and « Virtue triumphant » in the Dresden Museum. The « Sleeping Diana » at Hampton Court, though it has been much injured, and the one we know from the engraving by Louys, prove clearly that Rubens chose his subjects from the history of the goddess of the chase to be able to paint at his pleasure nude women in all the brilliance of their plenteous flesh and all the grace of their attitudes. In these pictures the inquisitive and mocking Satyrs show the attraction that the delicious flesh of women has for inferior beings. In the « Nymphs and Fauns picking fruit » in the Oldenbourg Museum, he shows us once again the children of nature tasting the joy of life without care, without remorse and without anguish.

We know three versions of the « Diana returning from the Chase » ; the oldest, in which the figures are represented down to the knees, in the Dresden Museum ; a second, with certain

modifications of detail in the composition, and full-length figures, also in that Museum; and a replica of this latter in the Museum at Darmstadt.

In the two Dresden pictures the figures were painted by Rubens, the animals and fruits by Snijders. In a letter written on the 25<sup>th</sup> February, 1617, to Dudley Carleton, Tobie Matthew says that he and others had been delighted with these pictures, and that Snijders had painted the dead birds in them. It is indeed a charming scene, and the large picture, especially, is an admirable work. It shows Diana holding a long spear in one hand, and in the other carrying a number of dead birds in the fold of her caught up robe; she is followed by three nymphs, one of whom carries a dead buck. Three hounds leap around her; before her go three satyrs with cloven hoofs: one holds a basket of fruits on his head, and is offering the goddess a bunch of grapes; another is carrying an armful of fruit. It is a scene of natural and sunny life, in which paganism takes on a Flemish tint without losing its plastic beauty. On one side we see the chaste goddess dropping her eyes in modest confusion before these beings, half-sunk in animal nature, while still fearlessly displaying the opulent nudity of her breast and limbs. On the other side are the satyrs lightly sneering at the sight of the goddess and her embarrassment, teasing her in a friendly way and examining her with as much irreverence as she shows timidity. The contrast between the handsome shapes of these women somewhat wearied by the chase and the rough but vigorous limbs of the sylvan creatures, gives a delicious effect. There is a mixture of classicism in the figures and attitudes and of naturalism in the expression of exuberant life, in which Rubens's double nature is manifested in a striking manner; it is a subject that might be engraved in a cameo. The figures are sharply defined against a pale grey sky; the colour is rich, the light equally distributed, full though temperate; the dark backgrounds of heretofore have completely disappeared, the shadows are grey, the degradations grey-blue with red lights, especially where the red drapery of Diana is reflected, and the flesh has fluidity and warmth, though it does not yet show the brilliant whiteness which the master was to lend it later. These pictures probably date from 1616.

In the *Venus and Adonis* Rubens shows us the most charming group that could possibly be imagined. Adonis, the fairest of the sons of men, is on the point of tearing himself away from the most seductive of goddesses. He has taken the first pace, with his hand leaning on his long lance, while his dogs leap barking at their master to induce him to follow them; but Venus, coming up in haste on learning the sad news, descends from her chariot drawn by swans, and, before her feet touch the ground, flings her arms round the neck of her beloved, and gazes at him lovingly, imploring him to remain. He pushes her gently away, smiling at her importunity, but shutting his lips tight and refusing to speak the longed-for word. He wishes to start on the chase, where his fatal doom awaits him. The picture is an idyll of love with a tragic ending, and its characters are the most charming of beings, ravishing in expression and attitude.

We know of several versions of this subject. One in the Hermitage in St Petersburg is painted with the greatest care, and shows the old blue shadows on white flesh, and reddish lights on the shaded outlines. The landscape is by van Uden. A second version, in the Museum at The Hague, the authenticity of which has, wrongly in our opinion, been contested, seems to be more recent by several years. In both Rubens painted the figures and had the

animals done by a collaborator, who was probably Jan Wildens. One of the pictures, and possibly both, go back to a somewhat remote period, for Baudius mentions a « Venus and Adonis » between 1611 and 1613; this might well be the picture in the possession of Herr Becker of Berlin (1).

Rubens took up the same subject again, giving it larger dimensions (*Œuvre*. No 694), and modifying the principal group. Venus, with tears in her eyes, is sitting on a grassy bank, and

striving to detain her lover, whom Cupid is holding back by the leg. Here again the group is entirely charming, and its tones clear and sweet. The figures were painted by Rubens, the accessories by Wildens. The picture was given by the German Emperor to John, duke of Marlborough, and formed in more recent times part of the Blenheim Gallery, with which it was sold.

In the inventory of Rubens's goods we find a « Venus and Adonis » after Titian (*Œuvre*. No 695). This copy was bought by the king of Spain. It is not known what has become of it. Pacheco states that Rubens painted it in 1628 from the original picture, which belonged to Philip IV and is now in the Museum at Madrid. The work of the Italian painter provided Rubens with a model for his treatment of the same subject, especially in the picture which belonged to the duke of Marlborough. But, since he painted this latter well before 1628, he must have known Titian's work previously. It is



THE STATUE OF CERES (Hermitage, St Petersburg)

true that besides the original at Madrid there is a second version belonging to the National Gallery in London.

SCENES OF RURAL LIFE. — Two of the pictures painted by Rubens at this time are usually classed among the landscapes, because Schelte a Bolswert included them in the series of large plates which he engraved after Rubens's landscapes, though they have nothing in common with this kind of work beyond the fact that they represent scenes of village life. The subject of one of them, in the Antwerp Museum, is the « Prodigal Son » (*Œuvre*. No 260). The hero of the parable is kneeling on the right in a peasant's stable and imploring a maid-servant, who is throwing grain into the pigs' trough, to give him a little of their food. On the left we see pigs, cows, horses, four men-servants and a maid-servant. Through the open door of the sty shows

(2) See *Bulletin-Rubens*, V, p. 188.





DIANA HUNTING  
(Museum, Dresden)

animals done by a collaborator, who was evidently Jan Willemz. One of the pictures, and possibly both, go back to a somewhat remote period. The finished versions of a *Venus and Adonis* – between 1611 and 1613 – this means just at the close of the procession of Herr Becker of Berlin (1).

Rubens took up the same subject again (among *Œuvre des Rubens*, volume No 694) and modifying the principal figures *Venus* and *Adonis* in the same or a slightly bank, and



THE STATUE OF CYBELE (Giovanni Stanetti)

adding to them, not only, *Adonis* (Capit. in the museum, in the city of Rome) but also a *Venus and Adonis* (Capit. in the museum, in the city of Rome) and a *Venus and Adonis* (Capit. in the museum, in the city of Rome). The picture was given by the German Emperor to John, duke of Marlborough, and formed in more recent times part of the Blenheim Gallery, with which it was sold.

In the inventory of Rubens's goods we find a *Venus and Adonis* – after Titian (*Œuvre*, No 692). This copy was bought by the king of Spain. It is not known what has become of it. Pacheco states that Rubens painted it in 1625 from the original statue, which belonged to Philip IV and is now in the Museum at Madrid. The work of the Italian painter provided Rubens with a model for his treatment of the same subject, especially in the position of the figures and the landscape. The picture is now in the collection of the National Gallery in London.

It is true that besides the original of *Venus and Adonis* there is a second version belonging to the National Gallery in London.

SCENES OF RURAL LIFE. Two of the pictures painted by Rubens at this time are usually classed among the landscapes, because Schelte a Bolswert included them in the series of large plates which he engraved after Rubens's landscapes, though they have nothing in common with this kind of work beyond the fact that they represent scenes of village life. The subject of one of them, in the Antwerp Museum, is the *Prodigal Son* (*Œuvre*, No 200). The hero of the parable is kneeling on the right in a peasant's stable and imploring a maid-servant, who is throwing grain into the pigs' trough, to give him a little of their food. On the left are two pigs, cows, horses, four men-servants and a maid-servant. Through the open door of the sty shows

(1) See *Annuaire de l'Art*, V, p. 128.

DIANA HUNTING  
(Museum, Dresden)











a corner of landscape. The picture dates from about 1612; the texture is thin and smooth and the work roughly finished. Through the black cow lying down shows the brown colour of the background, and so too with the light grey horse. What gives life to the composition is a brilliant effect of light at the back, and the flame of the candle held by a stable-woman. It is a study from nature, entirely painted by the master's hand, and a proof of the interest he took in humble scenes which might strike him by their picturesque side.

The other picture we alluded to, which is very like the foregoing, represents a « Stable and landscape in Snow ». It belongs to the king of England and is at Windsor (*Œuvre*, N° 1173). The matter treated is the same as in the preceding picture: a stable with cows, horses and agricultural implements: in one corner a little separate scene; and behind, a landscape seen through wide openings. The connection between the two pictures is shown still more precisely by a shepherd wearing a felt hat, and leaning forward, with his chest resting against his long crook, who occurs in both compositions. In the Windsor picture the landscape has more importance than in the other; the stable is more like a coach-house; outside are a farm and some trees; the snow covers the ground and the roofs and is still falling. The episode is supplied by a troop of beggars, who have lit a little fire at which they are warming themselves. This group, like the rest of the characters and animals, is Rubens's own painting; the landscape was painted by a collaborator. The reflection of the fire-light on the figures round it is particularly highly finished; in that respect the picture resembles the « Flight into Egypt », which was painted soon afterwards.



THE RESURRECTION — Drawing for the Breviary of 1614 (British Museum, London).

THE LAST JUDGMENT. — The crisis through which Rubens passed after 1612 only lasted till 1615, and as we have said, it did not reveal itself in all his works. Soon the dramatic genius awoke in him anew, and he produced a series of works bolder in conception and more spirited in action than those he had painted before his years of arrest and feebleness. He began with the most violent of all, the series of the « Last Judgment », with its terrors and its celestial joys. No doubt, he had been seized with an ambition to try his powers against Michael Angelo, the most audacious of artists, and to produce a work which might support a comparison with the most famous and tragic of the Italian master's. Michael Angelo had painted his master-piece between 1535 and 1541 on the wall of the Sistine Chapel in the Vatican. Rubens had seen it in all the splendour of its immaculate freshness; he had admired it, but it had not satisfied him. From his point of view, the subject was capable of being conceived in a different and superior way. Michael Angelo had made of the terrible event, which is to be the climax of the history of the world, a picture in which the representation of the beautiful human body in an infinite variety of action and attitude constitutes the chief

interest, and in which the ruling element is the endeavour to display academic forms, to bend the human body into all movements and engage it in the most extraordinary actions. Not only are the isolated figures considered in themselves or in relation to others, but the groups form compartments which testify to more calculation than passion. The lower part is composed half of those called back to life, who are rising from the tomb, and half of the damned who are being precipitated into the infernal gulf; the middle region contains, on the left, the just, rising to heaven, on the right the damned, who are being dragged down into hell; in the centre are angels with trumpets and books, in which are written the good and evil deeds of men. In the upper part is the judgment-seat; Christ, with his mother and the holy martyrs on either side of him, forming an almost perfect circle around him; on the left is a group of saints; above, on both sides, a troop of angels bearing the instruments of Christ's passion. That is not how Rubens conceived the subject. The division into groups seemed to him the negation of the horror that must freeze the damned, and the ecstasy which must rouse the transports of the elect, of the confusion and the disorder that must reign in the crowd of all mankind set in motion by an irresistible power. Above all, the fall of the damned attracted him. The sentence pronounced by the sovereign judge and carried out by his ministers appeared to him like a hurricane swooping upon the evil-doers and hurling them through space; as the leaves are swept along by the tempest and swirl madly in their unbridled course, so must the wicked of all kinds and all ages be precipitated into the abyss, fighting, howling, stretching out their arms in desperation to find a holdfast. Angels and demons, the former with pitiless severity, the latter with fiendish joy, must drag, push, and goad the distracted crowd ever further and further, ever down and down till they reach the burning lake. And the trumpets, blowing furiously, must stifle their cries and clamour, and increase their terror yet further by strident blasts, making the divine vengeance resound in the ears of the accursed cast into the eternal flames. Compared with this scene of horror, the peaceful ascension of the elect had less attraction for him. The blessed legions mounting to heaven in joy and ecstasy contained no inspiration for his impetuous genius, and he neglected them, or gave them only a modest place in his work. He painted in succession  The Last Judgment , which he did three times, the  Fall of the Damned , of which we have two versions, and the « Ascension of the Blessed ».

We regard it as certain that the idea of painting the last judgment came to Rubens during his residence in Italy, and that he treated the subject at that time. The picture he seems to have made then, which was formerly in the collection of the marquis Luigi Grimaldi della Pietra at Genoa, now belongs to the marquis Cesare Durazzo in the same town, and is only known to us by Rosaspina's engraving (*Œuvre*, N° 92). It shows Christ throned on high in heaven, with his mother and a semi-circle of saints about him, while two groups of angels bear the cross and the pillar of scourging. On the right the damned are falling; on the left, the elect take their flight toward the heavens; below the Redeemer fly angels, the ministers of judgment; at the bottom of the composition the dead rise from their tombs. The artist has broken with the divisions and the superimposed planes of Michael Angelo, while keeping the principal groups the same. The attitudes also are entirely different. The condemned fall in a compact mass, pushed down by angels, while demons are drawing them towards them; they are hurled



head downward, thrown forwards or backwards, passive, without resistance; on the other side the blessed mount to heaven; they are feminine forms of splendid and opulent outline. Fire and unity are still lacking. The idea is there already, but there was not strength to carry it out. An absolute proof that the picture is by Rubens is the appearance of two groups exactly answering to those which figure in his later interpretation of the same subject, now in the Pinakothek at Munich.

Later, Rubens divided his subject and painted the « Fall of the Damned » and the « Assumption of the Just » separately. He made two pictures of them, one of which, the « Fall of the Damned » is in the Museum at Aix-la-Chapelle (*Œuvre*. N° 93<sup>(2)</sup>) and the other, the « Assumption of the Just » in the Pinakothek at Munich (*Œuvre*. N° 94). They are of exactly the same dimensions, and were evidently meant to hang together. Another proof that they were painted at the same time is that Rubens sketched several versions of different groups in the « Assumption of the Just » on the back of a study made for the « Fall of the Damned », which is in the British Museum (*Œuvre*. N° 1419).

The picture of the « Assumption of the Just » was never completely finished. In 1628, when, after the death of Isabella Brant, the inventory of the goods found in the deceased's house was drawn up, a sum of 100.000 florins was included as the price of the works of art sold by Rubens to the duke of Buckingham. But 6.000 florins were deducted from this sum for a picture representing the Ascension of the blessed souls which Rubens had undertaken to deliver with the works hereinbefore mentioned to the duke aforesaid, and which he had not begun at the date of the death of his deceased wife. Jan Wildens bought a work that came from Rubens's estate and bore the title of the « Ascension of the Blessed Souls », « imperfect and only a sketch or beginning of a picture, for he had only painted a few figures in the middle ». According to the document from which Mr F. Jos. van den Branden drew this detail, Wildens had this sketch finished by Jan Boeckhorst. The finishing can have meant little, if, as we suppose, the sketch in question is no other than the canvas now in the Pinakothek at Munich.

In any case it follows from this statement that in 1625 Rubens intended to paint the « Assumption of the Just »; the picture must have been of large size considering that he asked 6.000 florins for it. The sketch alone existed at that time. We have previously expressed the opinion that Rubens had made it in Italy, and that he brought it back to his native country, like the « Fall of the Damned » in the Museum of Aix-la-Chapelle, to keep it, till his death, in his studio (1). Our hypothesis rested on the fact that in the « Fall of the Damned » (*Œuvre*. N° 93<sup>(2)</sup>) there were faults of taste which Rubens would not have allowed himself to commit later; that in the « Assumption of the Just » two of the principal groups are the same as in the Genoa picture engraved by Rosaspina, and finally that the work is very inferior to the small « Last Judgment », painted about 1615, which we shall have to deal with later. But other reasons have led us to the conviction that the « Fall of the Damned », like its pendant, the « Assumption of the Just », dates from another period of Rubens's artistic activity. In the first place, the colour and light of this last picture appear to us to belong to the period of about

(1) *Œuvre de Rubens*, Vol. I, p. 109.

1615, whence it naturally follows that its pendant would not have dated any further back. Another reason is supplied by a fact that struck us while studying the works of Rubens in their entirety, and not in their particular genesis, a fact of the utmost importance in the history



STUDY FOR THE FALL OF THE DAMNED - Drawing (National Gallery, London).

of the artist. He was in the habit of executing in a short space of time a whole series of pictures analogous in subject, and then of returning to it no more. Thus he painted one after another all his hunting-scenes, his bacchanalian scenes, his literary subjects, and most of his landscapes. It is needless to say that certain kinds he cultivated all through life, like sacred and profane history, mythology and portrait. But the conviction that, with these exceptions, he painted at short intervals one after another all the works of a single kind, has strengthened our presumption that all the interpretations of the « Last Judgment » and the subjects related to it belong to the same period, and that consequently the « Fall of the Damned », under its double form, the « Assumption of Just », the large and the small « Last Judgment » and the « Fall of the Angels », were created rapidly one

after another between 1615 and 1618. The only specimens of attempts made by him at other times to treat subjects of this nature are the « Last Judgment » belonging to his Italian period, and the « Triumph of Religion over Paganism and Vice » (*Œuvre*. No 384), which he painted about 1612 for the bishop of Freysing.

In the « Assumption of the Just » in the Pinakothek at Munich (*Œuvre*. No 94), the unfinished picture found among the goods of Rubens, Christ is throned on a rainbow in the



middle of an immense glory. Much lower down the elect are mounting to heaven, borne by angels. In the middle a compact group rises in pyramidal form. Below, the dead are awaking, and the damned, indicated by vague tones, are conducted into hell. The sketch is too little worked out to give any idea of Rubens's conception, but such as it is, it shows an incoherent whole, with meagre lines on the left, a confused group in the middle, monotonous light and feeble colouring, which make up a work very unworthy of the master.

The *Fall of the Damned* » (*Œuvre*. Nos 93-93<sup>(2)</sup>) is of very different worth, and a single glance is enough to show that Rubens worked at it with more spirit. There are two versions of this picture; one, of smaller dimensions, is that in the Museum at Aix-la-Chapelle, which we regard as a pendant of the *Assumption of the Just* »; the other, two and a half times as big, is that in the Pinakothek at Munich (*Œuvre*. No 93).

The latter is the one which best enables us to judge of the work. We are in the realms of dread, of horror, of nightmare. Alone in the heights hovers the Archangel Michael, armed with his buckler on which is written the name of Jehovah, and the thunderbolt,

the weapon of the Almighty. He rises from the bosom of the empyrean in a blinding glory. Under his feet the damned are hurled into the abyss. Rubens has in general given them regular forms, confining himself to placing in their midst two men and a woman of exceptionally massive build, to represent the damned punished for their excesses. The Archangel is striking only some ten of the damned in his immediate neighbourhood, who are falling like bodies that have been precipitated by the impact of a furious blow. The rest are not abandoned to their



STUDY FOR THE FALL OF THE DAMNED — Drawing (National Gallery, London).



own weight, but are delivered up to demons who are dragging them towards hell. The result is a certain unity of effect and great variety in the fall of the bodies. They do not fall in a mass, but by series and in groups created by the character or caprice of the monsters who have seized upon them. Demons of human form grip the wretched beings with savage joy and incredible rage; fastening on to them with their claws, pushing them with their feet, seizing them by the hair, and sending them hurtling into the abyss in perpendicular or oblique lines. Other demons have animal forms: dragons with seven heads, every one of which is seizing its prey, serpents that coil about the limbs of the condemned, monkeys with bats' wings making terrifying grimaces, men with tails carrying them off on their backs towards the infernal flames, or throwing them as food to the lions, wolves, and horrible monsters of every kind that wait below to rend them in pieces.

With extreme vivacity Rubens has imagined a human avalanche precipitated from heaven to earth, and he has given this vision so terrifying and lifelike a form, that we exclaim: Thus and thus only can it happen! The lost do not fall, they tumble hurled backwards, with their arms stretched into space; some on their backs, seeking in vain a support for their feet, others face downward, hiding their faces in their hands; others again headforemost, tossing their legs in the air. One clutching another, they form bunches and chains thrown obliquely downwards. The painter has not only rendered the horror of the falling of the bodies, he has also painted the anguish of the damned, the terror that transforms their faces, their desperate efforts to grapple to anything, their piteous mien as they find themselves carried off without hope of defending themselves, towards the infernal furnace that awaits them, flaming in the abyss.

The horror of the scene is further increased by the effect of the light. Celestial brightness streams from on high, and soon takes on a bluish tint to light the demons and their victims. This powerful ray of light casts a thick shadow on both sides of St Michael; lower down the infernal flames leap up; on the left they are effaced by the celestial light; but on the right they dart their red tongues to heaven, with yellow and ruddy lights and shadows of black smoke. Right at the bottom, on the edge of the burning crater the infernal comedy is in progress; there, against a dark background, the damned are being thrown as food to the ferocious beasts of hell. It is a terrible conception of titanic grandeur, never equalled by any artist, be he Michael Angelo, Dante or Milton; it is a transposition of the human drama far beyond and above life. The picture is, besides, splendid in design and colour, the mixture of natural and supernatural lights and shades, reflected on the bodies of men and animals, is rendered in a masterly fashion.

The great *Fall of the Damned* was at Ghent in 1677; in that year it was bought by the duke de Richelieu; in 1733 it formed part of the Adriaan Bout sale at The Hague, where it was knocked down to the Elector Palatine. In 1687, Nicodemus Tessin saw a second example of it of the same size at Brussels (1).

The numerous drawings which Rubens made for the different groups prove the importance he attached to this work and the care with which he made the preliminary studies. The National Gallery, in London, has four of these drawings, the British Museum two others, the

(1) *Besuch in Holland van Nicodemus Tessin* (Oud-Holland xviii, 208).

Albertina at Vienna a seventh, and it is probable that Rubens made others besides (*Œuvre*. Nos 1412-1417).

We might fancy that after completing the « Fall of the Damned » he would never touch the same subject again, unless it were to develop it on some colossal canvas, destined to cover the wall of a church. We should be in error. Soon afterwards, perhaps in 1616, he took up again the great work which seemed to be an obsession and to leave him no peace until he had mastered its tremendous difficulty. That he achieved in his « Small Last Judgment » which is also in the Pinakothek at Munich (*Œuvre*. No 91). The vast subject is there treated on a smaller scale, with fewer figures, and, so to speak, condensed. The panel is 5 ft. 10 in. high by 3 ft. 10 in. wide. It is not a sketch, but a carefully finished picture.

Christ is throned with his mother in celestial glory : he pronounces sentence on the damned, while she implores his pity and points to the phalanx of saints kneeling on the left. On the right, in greyish and transparent light, we catch a glimpse of saints sketched in dull tones. On the left, in rays of light which fall from above, the elect, enveloped in very thin, greyish tints, are being conducted to Paradise by angels, and move in a semi-circle from the extreme left towards the right, where they are received in the abode of the blessed.

The picture was originally rectangular; it is now round at the top. The semi-circular part must have been added by the painter to take in the Christ, his mother and the celestial spirits. At first the picture was concerned solely with the « Fall of the Damned », and the engraving made by Suyderhoef in 1642 gives nothing else; later, the painter added the « Assumption of the Just ». The addition is merely an accessory, and rather injurious than beneficial. There are now, in fact, two places in the picture on which the light is focussed; one is entirely at the top, where Christ is sitting and whence his glory radiates over the part within the semi-circle; the other surrounds the archangel Michael and illuminates the mass of the damned whom he is striking with his thunderbolt, and all the left part of the scene. Rubens attached no great importance to the « Assumption of the Just ». It occupies but a small part of the left side of the picture and the semi-circle which surmounts it. From heaven there descends a blinding radiance in which Christ, the sovereign judge, is sitting, and through which mount the blessed, whose forms seem to be blotted out and to dissolve.

The capital part of the work is the « Fall of the Damned ». In taking up his mighty subject again, Rubens simplified the action. At the top, from the centre to the extreme right, we see St Michael and five great angels with thunder-bolts in their hands, carrying out the sentence of the supreme judge. Borne by their powerful wings, they sweep impetuously on the crowd of the condemned, chasing them before them. Only in the lower part of the picture do the demons appear, dragging their prey towards the abyss. The damned who have reached the ground are haled towards hell, which glows red and flames in the right corner. Those who are still falling form a crowded and compact group crossing the panel obliquely from left to right and from top to bottom. Some groups and isolated figures are detached from it on the right. These are far less numerous than in the « Fall of the Damned », and there are not twenty in all. But they not only form a closer group, the revolutions of their fall are bolder and more varied. The contortion of every one of these figures is inspired by anguish. The man who is being pushed into the abyss by an angel pressing a hand on his head, and

drawn down by a demon who is pulling at a serpent which he has tied round his leg, while he clings with both hands to the angel's arm and wing in the effort to avoid falling; the woman hurled backwards and dragged by the hair by a devil; the other who is falling head downwards; the condemned man whose legs and arms are outstretched as he rolls into hell;



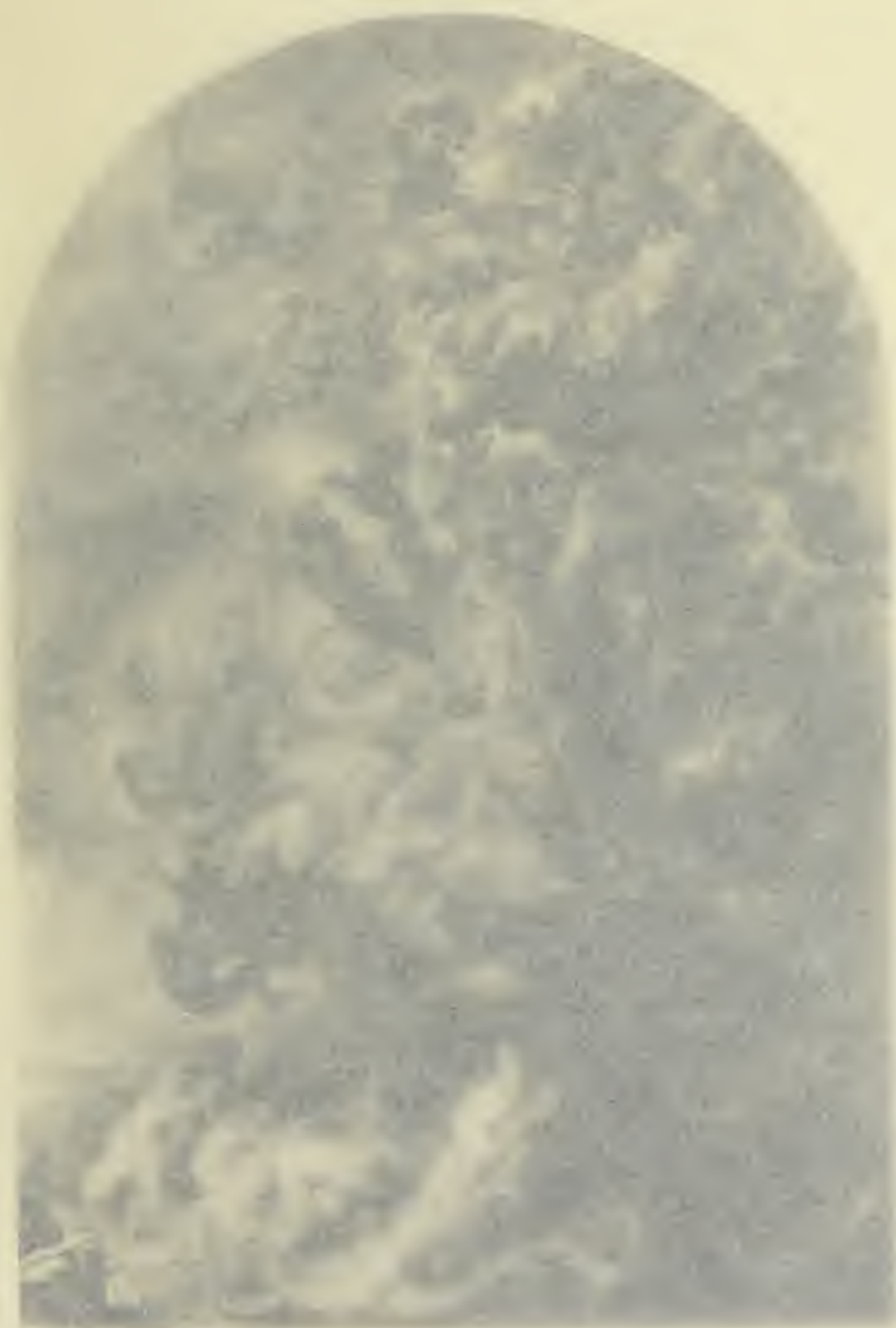
THE GREAT LAST JUDGMENT (Pinakothek, Munich).

another, who is bending his legs without resisting and letting his arms hang; a third who throws up his head and the upper part of his body as he falls; the angels brandishing thunderbolts; and the demons clinging to their prey, the damned, desperately resisting but compelled to yield to force; every figure and every group is striking, tragic in its plastic beauty and the stupendous struggle it are engaged in.

The light and the colour are equally amplified. In place of varied effects of radiance, Rubens has employed only two dominating tones in the *Small Last Judgment*: the celestial light on the left and the infernal flames on the right, with a darker portion about the middle. The bodies lit by the celestial light are fair, with shadows of bluish grey; the infernal flames give them

tones of glowing red; in both kinds of light they become transparent and seem to dissolve. The same *ensemble* and the same unity in the scale of colours is to be noticed. The group of angels in the centre forms the point of light; St Michael wears pale green armour, red drapery and a gleaming steel-blue shield; at his side stands an angel clad in a brilliant dark blue robe, which gives the strongest note of the whole picture; a third is wearing a crimson robe, and the rest are in pale red, green, and dark violet. At the bottom there are no colours but the white, pink and brown of the flesh; here the light and its reflections operate alone, but with richness enough to enable them to dispense with colour.





THE SWALL LAST JUDGMENT  
(Pinakothek, Munich)

drawn down by a demon who is pulling at a horizontal ribbon. In this case round his feet, while he clings with both hands to the rope, and while he still holds the round ring, the woman hurled backwards and dragged by the hair of her head and shoulders in falling freed downwards; the condemned man, whose face and form are glistening with sweat and fall;



THE SMALL LAST JUDGMENT (Pinakothek, Munich)

and the demon, who is pulling at a horizontal ribbon. In this case round his feet, while he clings with both hands to the rope, and while he still holds the round ring, the woman hurled backwards and dragged by the hair of her head and shoulders in falling freed downwards; the condemned man, whose face and form are glistening with sweat and fall;

The form and the colour are equally amplified. In place of varied effects of radiance, Rubens has employed only two dominating tones of light. The Last Judgment is a scene of intense physical struggle, with a darker portion about the middle. The bodies lit by the celestial light are fair, with shadows of bluish grey; the internal flames give them

tones of glowing red; in both kinds of light they become transparent and seem to dissolve. The same *ensemble* and the same unity in the scale of colours is to be noticed. The group of angels in the centre forms the point of light. St Michael wears pale green armour, red drapery and gleaming steel-blue shield; at his side stands an angel clad in a brilliant dark blue robe, which gives the strongest note of the whole picture; a third is wearing a crimson robe, and the rest are in pale red, green, and dark violet. At the bottom there are no colours but the white, pink and brown of the flesh, here the light and its reflections operate alone, but with brightness enough to enable them to dispense with colour.

#### THE SMALL LAST JUDGMENT (Pinakothek, Munich)







There is another difference to be noted between the « Fall of the Damned » and the « Small Last Judgment » ; the crowd of the damned is less passive in the latter picture. The condemned are defending themselves, the ministers of the divine decrees are making efforts on their part, and in the whirlpool that spins in space a furious battle is raging without hope and without pity. The combat is continued on the earth, where a part of the damned are defeated, and demons in human or animal form, strong and pitiless, drag them towards and toss them headlong into the midst of the flames, which dart their fiery tongues in the corners. The violence of the executioners, the resistance and the lamentations of the damned, give the picture the aspect of an immense *mêlée*, which fills heaven and earth and forms a drama such as Rubens alone could have made, and the most striking of all those he created.

He gave relatively small dimensions to the « Fall of the Damned » and the « Small Last Judgment » we have just described, the figures measuring only a few inches. Soon afterwards he undertook the painting of the « Great Last Judgment » with lifesized figures. This picture also belongs to the Pinakothek at Munich ; it is 19 ft. 3 in. high by 15 ft. 2 in. wide (*Œuvre*, No 89). It was painted for the Count Palatine Wolfgang-Wilhelm, a great admirer of the master. On the 28<sup>th</sup> April, 1618, Rubens wrote to Dudley Carleton that he had in his possession a « Last Judgment » begun by one of his pupils after an original work painted by himself on a large scale for the prince of Neubourg, who had given 3500 florins for it. The copy was not finished yet, but Rubens promised to retouch the whole of it, so that it could pass for an original. This replica was 13 feet high by 9 wide. Gornitzius saw it still in Rubens's studio in 1624. We do not know what became of it. The original picture was placed over the high altar of the Jesuits' church at Neubourg. It was moved in 1692 into the collection of the Counts Palatine at Dusseldorf, whence it passed to Munich with the rest of that gallery in 1806.



VIGNETTE FROM AGUILONII OPTICA.

Christ is throned in judgment at the summit of the heavens ; at his side, to right and left, stand his mother and other saints, below we see the avenging angels. At the bottom, the dead are arising from their graves ; on the left the elect ascend to heaven ; on the right the damned are hurled into hell. In this case Rubens was not fortunate. It seems as if the obligation to make all the figures life-sized had prevented him from giving them the bold forms and audacious attitudes, which form the incomparable merit of his « Small Last Judgment » and his « Fall of the Damned ». Here, everything is harmoniously arranged, calculated and distributed ; there is no roughness, no wildness ; but order and symmetry and consequently also something of stiffness and coldness. All the life, the brilliance, the passion are deadened ; the feverish vision is scattered, leaving nothing but cold reasoning. The beautiful bodies resemble academic models, and their gestures drawing-exercises ; their scanty number, their relative calm and their measured forms and movements give no idea at all of the impression with which the violent scene would affect an artist gifted with an ordinary imagination.

The « Fall of the Damned » is sacrificed to the other parts. The interest is centred in the assumption of the just, the figures of whom are pleasant but a trifle insipid. The pale hued

man who is waking from the sleep of death and looking with blinking eyes upon the world that is just new-born, without emotion, without interest for the strange things that are happening — a figure which Rubens reproduced almost unchanged in the « Miracles of St François Xavier »; the dark man who is raising the stone lid of his tomb with a herculean effort; the woman who lifts to heaven a burning look of desire, the robust young man who is standing on tip-toe, are all splendid figures. It is difficult to judge this picture as colour, for it has suffered much from restorations and repaintings. The original brilliance has disappeared, to give place to a chalky tone with pink and bluish tints. In accordance with the plan which Rubens was then beginning to follow, and which he later made a practise of, the lower parts, which are the also the better, the dead recalled to life and the bottom parts of the groups of the elect and the damned, are painted by his own hand, while the upper parts were the work of his pupils retouched by the master.

The picture, which had been finished for some little time in April, 1618, probably dates from 1617, and already shows a close resemblance in manner to the altar-pieces painted two years later for the Jesuits' church at Antwerp.

The Dresden Museum has a « Great Last Judgment », a sketch finished like a picture. It is in better preservation than the altar-piece, and though it shows the same defects of composition, it is executed in a way more worthy of the master. Many small changes prove that here we have a different interpretation and not a simple copy.

The pictures of the « Fall of the Rebellious Angels » are of the same kind as those of the « Last Judgment ». Rubens painted one of them in 1619 for the duke of Neubourg, Wolfgang-Wilhelm; it is now in the Pinakothek at Munich, and we shall speak of it later (*Œuvre*. N° 86); another was formerly in the church of the Jesuits at Lille: the latter is lost, but the Museum at Douai has a copy. He painted this subject a third time on one of the ceilings of the church of the Jesuits at Antwerp (*Œuvre*. N° 87).

Among the representations of the life to come, we must mention also in Rubens's work the « Purgatory » and the « Triumph of the Maccabees » which were ordered of the painter by Maximilian Vilain, bishop of Tournai for the altar of the Souls in the cathedral of that town (*Œuvre*. N° 95). The first was, and still is, over the front of the altar; the other adorned the back and is now in the Museum at Nantes; the two pictures have little of interest to offer, and we do not know in what year they were painted. All that we know is that the bishop who ordered them held the see of Tournai from 1615 to 1644.

PORTRAITS. — We have already had occasion in this chapter to speak of two portraits, those of Nicolas Rockox and his wife Adriana Perez. Between 1612 and 1616 Rubens painted some twenty more, the chief among which we will review here.

Among the first portraits Rubens painted after his return to Antwerp we must certainly reckon those of the Archdukes, Albert and Isabella. He was their titular painter, and while they lived, it was his task to produce their official and authentic likenesses. There is no doubt that they commissioned him several times to paint their portraits. The earliest work of this kind we find mentioned is a portrait of the two Archdukes, for which they paid 300 florins and which was destined for the marquis of Siete-Yglesias, in Spain. The order for payment is dated the



13<sup>th</sup> October, 1615. The portraits of the two Archdukes engraved by Jan Muller bear the same date. It is probable that the pictures sent to the marquis of Siete-Yglesias were copies of those reproduced by the engraver, which represented the Archdukes in robes of state. The two portraits have been reproduced an incalculable number of times by Rubens or his pupils, but we do not know what became of the originals (*Œuvre*. N<sup>o</sup> 875). Among the numerous examples we have met with none were by Rubens himself. Two of them, which we only know from photographs, and which are reproduced on pages 110 and 111, seem to have the best title to be considered originals. In 1901, they belonged to Mr Richard C. Jackson of Camberwell. Albert is represented three quarter-length, bareheaded, with a lace collar, and wearing a dress of white silk embroidered in gold, with a short cloak over his shoulders. His right hand rests on the hilt of his sword, his left hand holds the cloak ; his richly plumed hat lies near him on a little table ; the insignia of the Golden Fleece sparkle on his breast. His hair is short and taken up in a knot. His expression is grave : he is a sovereign who means to be obeyed. His features are far from being handsome : his forehead is broad and strongly curved forward in the upper part, his jaws are heavy, his nose flat and irregular, his lower lip and chin are prominent, and the whole effect of all the features has nothing agreeable about it ; but his majestic attitude and severe expression make him more or less imposing. In the painted copies we see a black doublet with gold buttons ; the sleeves are white and the hat red with a small white plume.

Isabella (*Œuvre*. N<sup>o</sup> 967) has a regular and almost pleasant face. Her high, wide forehead, her regular nose, her little mouth and small chin, and her large clear eyes which look straight before her give her a rather heavy and masculine appearance, but not without beauty. She also is richly clothed. A diadem of pearls crowns her hair, which is taken up behind and ends in a bunch of jewels. An immense lace collar, on which her head lies as if on a plate, surrounds her neck ; she is wearing a quadruple collar of pearls, from which hangs a cross enriched with precious stones that lies on her breast. Her hands rest on her knees and hold a handkerchief and a fan. Her serious and distinguished face keeps a look of nobility, in spite of incipient stoutness. Judging from her portraits her hair was reddish brown, and she wore red and white flowers in it. Her black dress is almost entirely covered with gold.

These are the earliest portraits of these sovereigns painted by Rubens. They must have been executed originally a short time after his return to Antwerp about 1610, and repeated in 1615. In 1616 we find another pair of portraits (*Œuvre*. Nos 874, 968). « My secretary Rubens », writes Jan Breughel to Cardinal Borromeo on the 9<sup>th</sup> December, « has gone to Brussels to » paint the portraits of their Highnesses ». We know two portraits of the Archdukes painted about this time, but do not know whether they are those of which Breughel is speaking. The first represents the Archduke sitting in a red velvet chair in front of a curtain of the same material. On the right is the castle of Tervueren. The portrait of the Infanta, which forms a pendant to the foregoing, is exactly like the one we described above, except that the princess has become a little stouter. By her side appears the castle of Mariemont. These two pictures belonged to the Archdukes till their death. In 1636 they were sent to the king of Spain. They are now in the Museum at Madrid.

The two Archdukes were again painted by Rubens in a picture (*Œuvre*. N<sup>o</sup> 876) which was copied by Breughel in a work now in the Museum at Madrid, which represents the

Archdukes' collection of works of art. Albert is painted with his right hand lying on the table on which is his hat, and his left hand on the hilt of his sword. The Infanta holds a handkerchief in her left hand, and has her right round her husband's arm. The Count de Mérode at Brussels has a copy of the separate portrait of the Archduke Albert as he appears in this picture. We have met it also in other private collections; the copy which belongs to M. Duvivier, the advocate, of Brussels, has very much deteriorated, but appears to be Rubens's own. The separate portrait of Isabella represents her in the attitude which she has in the picture, except that her right hand lies on the back of a sofa. The count de Mérode has a copy of this also. The portraits, judging from the features of the sitters, appear to have been painted later than

those engraved by Muller and probably between 1616 and 1620.



VIGNETTE FROM AGUILONII OPTICA

Among the best portraits of this period we must mention further that of a man standing by a table with one hand on his hip, in the Dresden Museum (*Œuvre*. N<sup>o</sup> 1094). His face is fresh-coloured; the light is bright with thick shadows, and the picture must date from about 1615. The man with his hand on his chest in the Cassel Museum (*Œuvre*. N<sup>o</sup> 1089), a clear, fresh picture with bluish shadows and brown modelling, was painted about

the same period. The portrait of Jan Vermoelen, a bad-tempered looking gentleman, broadly and powerfully painted, bears the date 1616.

One of the earliest portraits of this period is that of Pieter Peck (Peckius or Pecquius) (*Œuvre*. N<sup>o</sup> 1018). He was born at Louvain in 1562, studied there and set up later at Mechlin as advocate to the Grand Council. He acquired a great reputation and in 1601 the Archdukes appointed him adviser to that tribunal. In 1607 they sent him as ambassador to the court of the king of France, Henri IV, who also held him in high esteem. In 1610 he was nominated a member of the privy council of the Archdukes; in 1614 he became their chancellor and confidential adviser. He died in 1625. Philip Rubens was in correspondence with Pecquius, and in the course of his diplomatic career Peter Paul came on several occasions into communication with him. When he painted his portrait, Pecquius may have been about 50. He is a man of solid build, in the full strength of his age; his head is large and powerful, his hair and beard are short and auburn in colour, his brows and nose are pronounced and his hands white. He is sitting in a chair with one hand resting on the back while in the other he holds a paper. He is draped in a cloak and wears a pleated collar. The figure is not a prepossessing one, and is painted with a fidelity that verges on savageness. The picture belongs to the duke of Arenberg in Brussels.

Between the years 1612 and 1616, Rubens also painted the portrait of Frederik de Marselaer (*Œuvre*. N<sup>o</sup> 989) and those of Alexander Goubau and his wife Anna Anthonis (*Œuvre*. N<sup>o</sup> 960).

We have not seen the portrait of de Marselaer, but to judge from the engraving and the description by M. Lafenestre, who saw it in 1892, when it was exhibited in Paris, it was painted when the subject was about thirty. Frederik de Marselaer was born at Antwerp in

1584, and his portrait therefore must date from 1614. At that date de Marselaer had several times filled the post of alderman of Brussels. Rubens had therefore made his acquaintance early. Later, he must have met him often, when the painter had bought a country house at Perck, of which de Marselaer had been the lord since his father-in-law's death. During this latter period, to be precise, in 1638, Rubens designed the frontispiece for one of de Marselaer's works, *Legatus*. According to Lafenestre, the portrait was drawn when the subject was in the full flower of his youth, with a curled moustache, bright, humid, languishing eyes, protruding almost out of his head, and a happy satisfied air, not without a slight dash of fatuity. The rapidity of touch, transparent *impasto*, and supple modelling of this lively and speaking portrait combine Rubens's best qualities, which his successors never cease to envy him, and which go to make a school (1). I may add that this opinion is confirmed in all points by the engraving made by A. Fogg after the portrait, though the subject is unfortunately named Grotius.



VIGNETTE FROM AGUILONII OPTICA

Alexander Goubau and his wife both belonged to important families in the town. According to his tombstone which was in the church of Notre-Dame, he died in 1604 at the age of seventy-four; his wife, who lived to seventy-two, died in 1621. The pair are represented as praying before a Virgin with an infant Jesus, who is stretching out his hands to them. Rubens painted the flesh in very pale tones with touches of carmine at the finger-tips, the eyes, noses and lips; the woman is paler with bluish touches, the man more brown; the expression of this man and woman in prayer is remarkable, and the painting is very broad, especially in the heads of the donors. The man was dead at the date of the picture, and must therefore have been painted after another portrait; the woman has quite the look of being seventy, and everything points to the work having been done about 1615. It was painted as a decoration for a monument and placed in the apse of the church of Notre-Dame at Antwerp against one of the pillars of the chapel of the four crowns. The picture was carried off by the commissioners of the French Republic in 1794; and as the figures represented were taken to be Christophe Plantin and his wife, it was sent to the Museum at Tours, the famous printer having been born in the neighbourhood of that town.

Speaking of Plantin, we have to add here that, about 1616, Rubens painted for his friend Balthasar Moretus ten portraits intended to adorn the rooms in the Plantin press. They were placed « in the great hall above the wainscot », that is above the tapestry which covered the walls, and they cost 14 florins 8 stuyvers apiece, a double proof that they were ordered and paid for as decorative paintings rather than real works of art. The people represented were Christophe Plantin (*Œuvre*. N° 1030), the grand-father of Balthasar Moretus and founder of the press; Jan Moretus, Plantin's son-in-law and Balthasar's father (*Œuvre*. N° 1006); Justus Lipsius, the tutor of Balthasar, who held him in particular esteem (*Œuvre*. N° 978); and finally the portraits of eight philosophers, scholars and patrons of the sciences and arts: Plato

(1) G. LAFENESTRE : *Artistes et Amateurs*. Paris, 1900, p. 293.



(*Œuvre*. N° 1032), Seneca (*Œuvre*. N° 813), Pope Leo X (*Œuvre*. N° 975), Cosimo and Lorenzo de Medici (*Œuvre*. N°s 994, 996), Pico della Mirandola (*Œuvre*. N° 1002), king Alfonzo of Aragon (*Œuvre*. N° 882) and Mathias Corvin, king of Hungary (*Œuvre*. N° 921). None of these portraits were painted from life, and all were taken from other pictures or the engravings in Paolo Giovio's *Elogia Virorum doctorum*.

BOOK-ILLUSTRATIONS. — We have seen that during his residence in Italy Rubens designed the plates for his brother's work, which was published by Jan Moretus. After his return to Antwerp, he made a large number of drawings, between 1613 and 1637, which were engraved as titles and ornaments for books.

For the missal and the breviary published in 1613 and 1614, he drew a series of ten plates which were used in the two works. For the title-page of the breviary he specially designed a frontispiece and a king David; for the missal a vignette representing Calvary. These plates were engraved in 1612, 1613 and 1614 (*Œuvre*. N°s 1250-1262). In 1613 appeared the work entitled *Francisci Aguilouii Opticorum libri sex*, for which Rubens drew a frontispiece and six vignettes (*Œuvre*. N°s 1234-1240); in 1615, the works of Seneca, for which he drew a frontispiece, a « Seneca dying in his bath », which lately belonged to Sir Charles Robinson, and a bust of Seneca (*Œuvre*. N°s 1305-1307). In the same year, he drew the bust of his brother Philip, which was published in 1615 in Philip's *Asterii Houillæ* (*Œuvre*. N° 1302). In 1616 he drew a frontispiece for the *Crux triumphans* of Jacobus Bosius, which appeared in the following year (*Œuvre*. N° 1248). Some of the first plates, those in the breviary and the missal, those for Aguilonius and the frontispiece of Seneca were engraved by Theodore Galle; the others by Cornelis Galle, the father, who afterwards engraved nearly all the plates drawn by Rubens for the Plantin press. As engravers of the drawings furnished by Rubens for the Plantin press the Galles rendered real service. The great painter used to draw his ideas for frontispieces very broadly with a pen, and later these drawings became more and more rapid. These vigorous but succinct notes supplied the engraver with the material for a plate finished in every detail, in which the Galles, father and son, succeeded in a truly masterful fashion. Rubens preferred their works to those of all the other engravers (1). However summarily Rubens sketched his ideas for frontispieces, they were none the less profoundly thought out. Balthasar Moretus testifies that the artist wished to be informed six months in advance every time he had to design a title, in order to reflect upon it and find the leisure to do it on holidays. On working-days, he does not occupy himself, he adds, with that sort of thing, unless he is paid 100 florins for a drawing (2). There is a tradition that Rubens calculated the price of his works according to the number of the days he devoted to them, and charged for them at the rate of 100 florins a day. Balthasar Moretus's words here quoted tend to confirm the legend.

Rubens made only a single drawing for another printer in the course of these early years. This was a frontispiece drawn in 1611 at the request of his friend Nicolas Rockox for the

(1) Curabo titulum incidi a Corn. Gallæo, cujus scilicet manu Rubenius delineationes suas sculpi in primis desiderat. (B. Moretus to Benedictus Haeftenius, 28th August, 1634. Archives of the Plantin-Moretus Museum).

(2) Balth. Moretus to Balth. Corderius, 13th September, 1630 (Archives of the Plantin-Moretus Museum).

work by Jacobus De Bie *Imperatorum Romanorum Numismata aurea a Julio Cæsare ad Heraclium*, which appeared in Antwerp in 1615, published by Gerhard Wolschaten and Hendrik Aertsens (*Œuvre*. No 1243). It was engraved on copper by the author of the work, Jacobus De Bie.

RUBENS'S PUPILS AND COLLABORATORS. — We have mentioned on several occasions that Rubens's pictures had been painted with the assistance of pupils or collaborators. His influence over the former was unlimited. They learned everything from him and adopted it all, composition and painting alike. As to the collaborators, they assimilated more or less the manner of Rubens, according as their own was more or less personal at the moment when they began to lend him their assistance; the best of them, with the exception of Vandyck, at most arrived at an imperfect fusion of their painting with the master's, in the pictures in which they collaborated.

Rubens soon found pupils flocking to him. This we know from a letter he wrote on the 11<sup>th</sup> May, 1611, to Jacob De Bie. De Bie had asked a place in his studio for a young man. Rubens replied that it was impossible for him to take anyone, all the places were engaged in advance, so that some pupils had to wait several years in apprenticeship to other masters before being able to come to him. « Thus », he continues, « among others my patron and » friend Mijnheer Rouckocx. has obtained with great difficulty a place for a young boy whom » he is having educated with this intention, and has placed meanwhile in apprenticeship to » others. Besides, I can say with truth and without the slightest exaggeration that I have been » obliged to refuse more than a hundred, and among them relatives of my own and of my » wife's, which has not failed to displease some of my best friends. Those who have been » accepted look upon it as great favour ». On the 28<sup>th</sup> August, 1614, Rycquius, in urging him to accept his nephew Stadius, writes to him : « To see Rubens, to salute him, to enjoy some small part of his affairs — I should count it supreme happiness ».

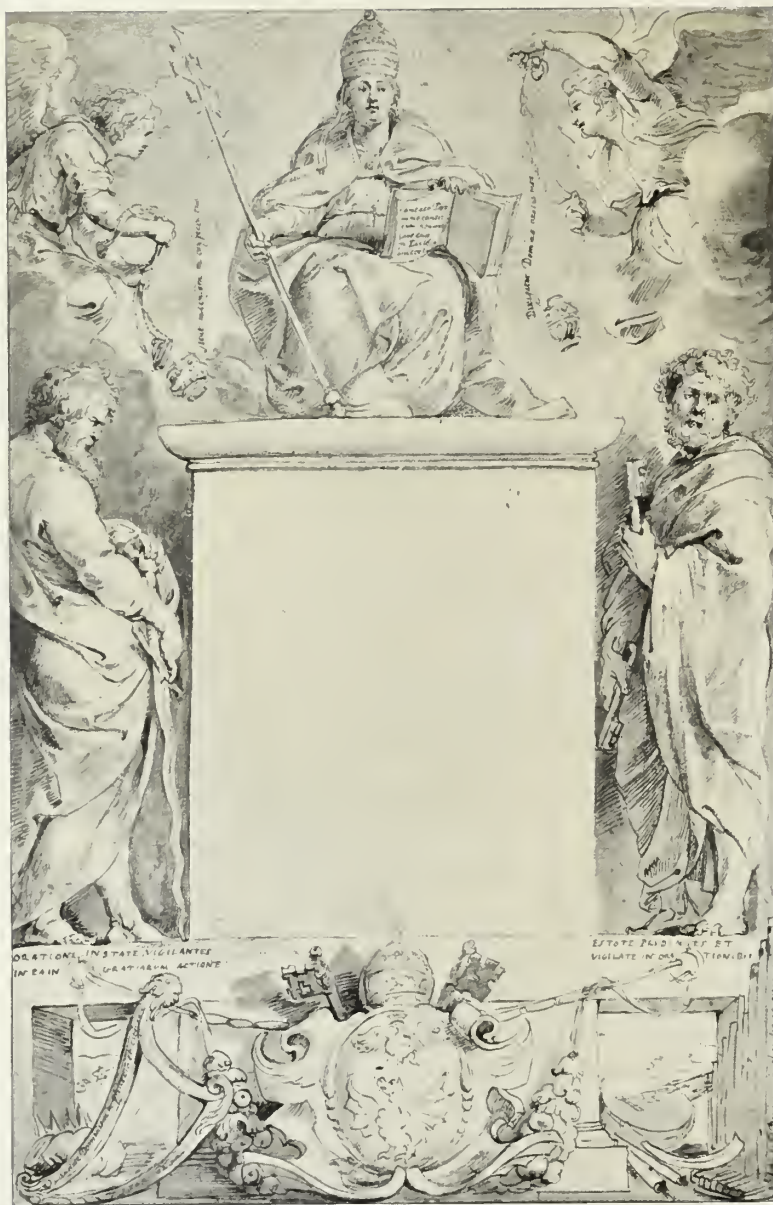
Unfortunately we do not know who his pupils were during the first years after his return, and we cannot even risk any supposition on the point. As court-painter Rubens was exempt from the charges laid upon the members of the Confraternity of St Luke, and his pupils were not obliged to have their names entered in the registers of the Corporation. Thus it happens that of his numerous pupils one only, Jacob Moermans, is found mentioned in 1621-1622, as having paid, on his entering Rubens's studio, the customary sum of 2 florins 16 stuyvers. Two other painters are mentioned as pupils of Rubens, on the occasion of their being admitted masters of the Confraternity of St Luke : Willem Panneels and Justus van Egmont, both of whom are entered in this quality in 1627-1628. For the period from 1608 to 1616, we know none of them with certainty. Two of them are named, but, oddly enough, they are stated to have learned painting under Rubens before his departure for Italy : they were Deodate del Monte and David Teniers the elder.

On the 26<sup>th</sup> August, 1628, Rubens made a declaration before the notary de Breuseghem which we have already quoted, and in which he affirms that several years before, del Monte had boarded and lodged with him to learn the art of painting, and that later he had accompanied him into Italy, and had travelled in various countries with him.

As to David Teniers, the legend on his portrait engraved by Pieter van Leysebetten after Pieter van Mol, states that he was born in 1582 and had learned painting under Rubens and Elsheimer. David Teniers was taken as a pupil by his brother Julian in 1595. He became a

master in the Confraternity of St Luke in 1606, and therefore can only have been Rubens's pupil after 1595 in Antwerp, or before 1606 in Italy.

Antonie Sallaert of Brussels is another who is mentioned as a pupil and assistant of Rubens. He was born about 1590 and was enrolled in 1606 in the register of the confraternity of the painters of Brussels; he was admitted master in 1613. No document or source of information states that he ever lived in Antwerp. However he is assigned a part, and even an important part, in certain of Rubens's works. Thus, as we have said above, he collaborated in the « Elevation of the Cross », of which he painted the shutters; and again the « Dispute of the Holy Sacrament » is his work. Sallaert certainly learned much from Rubens, if he did not attend his studio. In this connection, a better proof than his pictures is furnished by the engravings made by Jan-Christoffel



TITLEPAGE OF THE BREVIARY OF 1614  
Drawing (British Museum, London).

Jegher, after his designs, the style of which shows a striking resemblance to Rubens. It must be admitted, however, that the resemblance must be attributed in part to the engraver, who himself followed the manner of Rubens in interpreting the works of other artists.

The earliest collaborators of Rubens whom we know were Jan Breughel, Frans Snijders, Jan Wildens, Lucas van Uden, and Paul De Vos.





THE ANNUNCIATION  
(Albertina, Vienna)

As to David Teniers the legend on his portrait engraved by Pieter van der Werf after Peter van Mox, states that he was born in 1582 and had learned painting from Knauss and Elshemer. David Teniers was taken as a pupil by van Knauss about 1595. His subject matter is found in the Confraternity of the Lamb in 1600, and his paintings only have been traced back after 1605 in Antwerp, and after 1608 in Haarlem.



Design of the *Annunciation* of 1611.  
Engraved (after) Pieter van Mox.

legion after his designs, the style of which shows a striking resemblance to Moxen. It must be admitted, however, that the resemblance must be attributed in part to the engraver, who himself followed the manner of Rubens in interpreting the works of other artists.

The earliest collaborators of Rubens whom we know were Jan Brueghel, Peter Sanders, Jan Wildens, Louis van Uden, and Paul de Vos.

#### THE ANNUNCIATION (Albertina, Vienna)

Antonio van Dyck and Brueghel is another who is mentioned as a pupil and assistant of Rubens. He was born about 1590 and was enrolled in 1606 in the register of the confraternity of the painters of Brussels. He was admitted master in 1613. His reputation as painter of architectural scenes, and his part, with van der Meulen, in the restoration of Rubens's works. Thus, as we have said above, he collaborated in the *Elevation of the Cross*, of which he painted the figures, and also in the *Descent from the Cross*, which was painted by him and van der Meulen. His style, however, is entirely different from Rubens, if he did not attend his studio. In this connection a better proof than his pictures is furnished by the engravings made by Jan Galle after







Jan Breughel, called « Velvet Breughel », was born at Brussels in 1568, and was apprenticed at Antwerp to Pieter Goedkint, who died on the 15<sup>th</sup> July, 1583. In 1593 he was in Rome; and had returned to Antwerp by 1596. He soon entered into intimate relations with Rubens, who, like himself, was court-painter and favoured by the Archdukes. From 1610 onwards, Rubens became secretary to Breughel for his Italian correspondence with Cardinal Federigo Borromeo, archbishop of Milan, one of the heroes of Manzoni's *Promessi Sposi*. He painted the portraits of Jan Breughel and his wife, and in 1639 the pictures belonged to their son Ambrosius. He also painted the portraits of Pieter Breughel the elder, his wife and his two sons.

There is no doubt that Breughel early gave help to Rubens when his pictures had to include flowers of small dimensions and carefully finished. Among the earliest works in which his hand is to be recognised, we may mention the statue of Ceres in a niche, which little loves are encircling with garlands of fruits, which is now in the Hermitage and was painted between 1612 and 1615; the Madonnas surrounded with garlands of flowers in the Pinakothek at



HOLY FAMILY IN A WREATH OF FLOWERS, painted by Jan Breughel I  
(Museum, The Hague).

Munich, the Hermitage at St Petersburg, and the Museums of New York, Madrid and Brussels (*Œuvre*. Nos 197, 198, 199, 200); the « Three Graces » in the Stockholm Museum and the Academy at Vienna (*Œuvre*. No 614); the « Nature adorned by the Graces » in the Glasgow Museum (*Œuvre*. No 821) and the « Head of Medusa » in the Imperial Museum at Vienna (*Œuvre*. No 636). In one or two pictures he painted the animals and the landscape as well, as in the « Adam accepting the forbidden fruit » (*Œuvre*. No 97) in the Museum at The Hague, and in the « St Hubert » in the Berlin Museum (*Œuvre*. No 448).

Rubens seems to have equally appreciated another flower-painter, Frans Ykens; his goods

included six pictures by this young artist, among others a garland of flowers, within which Rubens had painted a Madonna (Inventory, No 249).

Frans Snijders was an Antwerper by birth; he was baptized on the 11<sup>st</sup> November, 1579. In 1602 he was admitted master in the Guild of St Luke; later he travelled to Italy, whence he returned to Antwerp about the middle of 1609. He was soon in touch with Rubens, and as they had both been living in Rome in 1608, it was there, no doubt, that they made each other's acquaintance. The earliest pictures by the master in which Snijders's collaboration may be recognised are the « Faun with the basket of fruits » in the Schoenborn collection at Vienna and the Dresden Museum (*Œuvre*. No 611) executed about 1612, and the « Meleager and Atalanta » in the Cassel Museum and the Rodolphe Kann collection, painted about 1615 (*Œuvre*. No 643). He painted animals and fruit in Rubens's pictures of all dates and all kinds, like the « Diana returning from the chase » in the Dresden Museum (*Œuvre*. Nos 595, 596, 597), the « Nymphs with the Cornucopia » (*Œuvre*. No 651) the « Prometheus » in the Oldenbourg Museum (*Œuvre*. No 671), the « Silenus and his train » in the Berlin Museum (*Œuvre*. No 678), the « Philopœmen », formerly in the collection of the duke of Orleans, the sketch for which forms part of the Lacaze collection in the Louvre (*Œuvre*. No 800) and the « Children carrying garlands of fruits » in the Pinakothek at Munich (*Œuvre*. No 865). Snijders was with justice the most highly esteemed of Rubens's collaborators.

Jan Wildens was born at Antwerp in 1586. In 1596 he became apprenticed to Pieter Verhulst, and was admitted master in 1604. He died on the 16<sup>th</sup> October, 1653. From 1613 to 1618 he lived in Italy. When he signed his marriage contract in 1619, he was attended by his good friend Pietro Paulo Rubens (1). Wildens probably worked under Rubens from 1608 to 1613, but we can only affirm his collaboration with certainty after his return from Italy; from that moment until Rubens's death he was his faithful assistant. He painted landscapes, animals, backgrounds, and accessories of all kinds in the master's pictures. We can prove Wildens's participation in some forty works, but we are convinced that he collaborated in a great many more, though the evidence is not always clear. In Rubens's studio Wildens filled the part of general utility man and factotum. He enjoyed the complete confidence of his master, whose will appointed him conjointly with Frans Snijders and Jacobus Moermans to proceed to the sale of his works of art.

Lucas van Uden was born at Antwerp on the 18<sup>th</sup> October, 1595, and became a master in the Confraternity of St Luke in 1626-1627. It is quite possible that he went to Italy in his youth. The last years of Rubens, from 1635 to 1640, were those in which he especially worked with him. His share was not confined to the treatment of accessories, but he frequently painted the principal part of Rubens's landscapes, while the master contented himself with painting the figures and retouching the rest.

Paul De Vos must have been born at Hulst about 1590; in 1606 he was apprenticed to David Remeus at Antwerp and was admitted master in 1620. He worked with Rubens more than is generally supposed. Formerly all the animals which appear in Rubens's pictures used to be attributed to Snijders, but there is no doubt that the large quadrupeds, both dead and

(1) F. JOS. VAN DEN BRANDEN : *Geschiedenis der Antwerpsche Schilderschool*, p. 684.



living, which we see in the master's compositions, were painted by De Vos. We are not without proof of the collaboration of the two artists. In his sketch-book, which is in the possession of M. René della Faille, Paul De Vos wrote in his own hand on the first page : « I, Paul De Vos, worked for Rubens 6 days », which proves that our painter of fruit and animals worked for the master by the day. In the inventory drawn up on the death of Isabella Brant, on the 28<sup>th</sup> August, 1628, Rubens notes the payment of 310 florins « to Paul De Vos, the balance in full of an old debt », and no doubt remuneration for work done for Rubens. In the description of the works of art left by the master there occurs a picture entitled « Peasant and peasant-woman by Rubens with much game and fruit by Paul De Vos ». This animal-painter chiefly collaborated with Rubens during the master's last years ; thus he worked, as Snijders did, on the twenty-eight hunting pictures ordered by Philip IV in 1636.

There is a remarkable difference between the manner of Rubens's assistants : the earliest still cultivated the style of the illuminators and belong to the same school as the brothers Bril, Hendrik van Balen, and Sebastian Vranckx, and are consequently very different from Rubens. This was especially the case with Velvet Breughel, whose first flower-paintings have a sharpness of form, hard reflection and finished execution which do not at all agree with the fatter and lighter painting of Rubens. Breughel never gave up that manner, and if the two collaborators made some concession to each other in their joint works, it came from Rubens's side as much as from Breughel's. There was never a true fusion, which indeed was unnecessary, since the illuminator's flowers merely served as frames for the history-painter's figures.

Frans Snijders held the mean between them : he had finished execution and brilliant colour, but his painting was broader and lighter than Breughel's ; that indeed was necessary, his animals and fruits being mingled with the figures. However, they stand out very clearly from Rubens's pictures ; their bright colours make them brilliant points ; but these spots of rich and various colour have no bad effect in the midst of the luminous painting. Paul de Vos is more in agreement with the manner of Rubens : his colour is duller and his brushwork looser ; his painting seems calculated to make a background, to be lighted up and animated by Rubens's finishing touches. Lucas van Uden, on the other hand, goes back to the precious style of painting. His little landscapes belong rather to the school of the Brils than to that of Rubens ; but no one had come so completely under the influence of the master or was better able to identify himself with him in his last years.

Rubens left his collaborators a great deal of liberty. While his pupils were compelled to follow what he prescribed to them in his sketches and had to confine themselves to enlarging and working them out, he allowed the painters of landscape, flowers and animals more freedom to follow their own inspiration. So, at least, we may conclude from one of the sketches we know, that for the « Philopœmen recognized by a Greek ». It is in the *salle Lacaze* in the Louvre Museum, and largely consists of provisions piled up on the spot where the general of the Achæans is occupied in chopping wood. Rubens had sketched the provisions ; Snijders, who was to finish them, introduced a number of alterations, as we see from the picture, which was engraved by C. N. Varin in the Orleans Gallery. In the sketch there is a hare laid on

the table ; in the picture it is a buck. The feathered game is replaced by fruit, and other things placed on the table supported by trestles have disappeared.

CELEBRITY OF RUBENS. — The number of pupils and collaborators employed by Rubens from the first years after his return is sufficient proof of the promptness with which he achieved succes ; the testimony of his contemporaries shows how great and swift was his



ADAM AND EVE -- Landscape and animals by Jan Breughel I (Museum, The Hague).

fame. The earliest is that of Gaspard Scioppius, who had seen Rubens in Rome, and who, in his *Hyperbolimarus*, published in 1607, praises not only the abilities of the artist, but the qualities of the man. — My friend Peter Paul Rubens, he writes, — in whom I know not which to praise the most, his ability in painting, in which he occupies the most exalted rank attained by any man of this century, or his knowledge of literature, his enlightened taste, and the all too rare agreement between his words and his deeds (1).

Poets are prolific in panegyric, and like to blow the trumpet on great occasions ; but without taking their hyperboles literally, we think it worth while to mention that in congratulating Rubens on his marriage celebrated on the 3<sup>rd</sup> October, 1609, Daniel Heinsius begins by calling him : — Him who does honour to us all, and in his art surpasses all the ancients, not

(1) *Bulletin-Rubens*. IV, p. 115.



(Wenzel, Hollar)  
Nativity Worshipped by the Graces



the room: in the picture it is a huck. The featured guests he produced for him, and others things placed on the table supported by nestles have disappeared.

CELEBRITY OF RUBENS. — The number of family and contemporary employed by Rubens from the first years after his return is sufficient proof of the general esteem with which he achieved success, the testimony of his contemporaries shows how great and well-regarded he



RUBENS, PETER PAUL. — NATURE ADORNED BY THE GRACES. (Museum, Glasgow.)

fame. The portrait is that of Caspar Barlaeus, who had seen Rubens in Rome, and who, in his *Hypobolismus*, published in 1607, praises not only the abilities of the artist, but the qualities of the man. — My friend Peter Paul Rubens, he writes, — in whom I know not which to praise the most, his ability in painting, in which he occupies the most exalted rank attained by any man of the century, or his knowledge of literature, his enlightened taste, and the all too true agreement between his words and his deeds. — (1)

There are prolific in panegyric, and like to blow the trumpet on great occasions, but without taking their hyperbole literally, we think it worth while to mention that in congratulating Rubens on his marriage celebrated on the 28 October, 1609, Daniel Heinsius began by calling him — "A man who does honour to his art, and in his art surpasses all the masters of

(1) *Hypobolismus*, p. 115.

NATURE ADORNED BY THE GRACES  
(Museum, Glasgow)







even excluding Apelles . No less enthusiastic is the praise of Dominicus Baudius, another professor in the University of Leyden, who on the 4<sup>th</sup> October, 1611, on learning that Rubens was proposing to visit Holland, gives him the following assurance : — You will be welcomed » among all the sincere admirers of your talent. You will fulfil their prayers, and especially » mine, for you have pierced my spirit with a dart of respect and admiration, and I cannot » behold without ravishment the masterpieces in which you vie with nature. Courage, Apelles » of our age, may your talents and your merit be recompensed by a new Alexander ! »

The Apelles of our age ! That is the second time we have heard the name applied to Rubens. In the same year Petrus Scriverius uses it again in the inscription he composed for the engraving by Swanenburg after Rubens's *Journey to Emmaus* . « We marvel at this picture by our Apelles », he writes. It is the name which the master's friends and admirers were to continue to give him, and which, for these men trained in the cult of antiquity, sums up all the praise that can be accorded to an artist.

Thenceforward Rubens's admirers placed his pictures not only above the ancients, but above his contemporaries too. Baudius wrote to him on the 11<sup>th</sup> April, 1612 : — We » have no lack of painters of renown.

Miervelt's reputation was formed long ago : in the opinion of connoisseurs, his » portraits deserve the celebrity and the » profit they bring him. There are others besides that flourish in our provinces, but, speaking » frankly, they do not come near the splendour of your works, if my eyes see clearly enough » to appreciate these things at their true value ».

In his own country, therefore, he promptly found honour, as he deserved. When the chief magistrate of Antwerp offered the *Adoration of the Magi* to don Rodrigo Calderon on the 2<sup>nd</sup> September, 1612, he spoke no more than the truth in affirming that it was — the most remarkable and the choicest gift » he could make him. Frans Sweertius, writing to William Camden on the 1<sup>st</sup> June, 1616, could then say without too much exaggeration : — We have » here a painter of great renown, named Rubens, who is known all the world over ». Bauhusius, in a letter of the 1<sup>st</sup> August, 1615, speaks of his divine genius (1). Magdalena van



FAUN AND FEMALE SATYR — Fruit by Frans Snijders  
(Schönborn Gallery, Vienna).

(1) P. Rubenius divino illo ingenio suo inveniet scio aliquid appositurum et lauro meae conveniens (Archives of the Plantin-Moretus Museum).

de Pass dedicates one of her prints to Rubens, — by far the greatest painter of the century — (1). Sir Dudley Carleton, English ambassador at The Hague, saluted him in 1618 by the title of prince of painters and painter of princes.

Commissions soon came in large numbers. On the 9<sup>th</sup> April, 1615, Balthasar Moretus could say to Philip de Peralta : — If your friend wishes to get what he wants elsewhere, where » better bargains may be had and people are not so particular as they are here about doing good work, we shall not take it amiss. Here we follow the example of an eminent painter we possess in the person of Rubens. He sends less competent judges to a less capable and expensive painter ; he himself is in no want of buyers for his excellent but costly pictures .

(1) P. P. Rubenio artis pictoriæ sæculi facile principi.



AN OX — Drawing (Albertina, Vienna).



FRAGMENT OF THE PORTICO OF THE EMPERORS (Entry of the Cardinal-Infant, 1635).

## CHAPTER V

### THE MIDDLE OF THE SECOND PERIOD

1617-1621

PICTURES PAINTED BY RUBENS FOR CHURCHES. RUBENS AND SIR DUDLEY CARLETON. — THE HUNTING-SCENES. — OTHER RELIGIOUS PICTURES. — THE HISTORY OF DECIUS. — PICTURES SENT TO SIR DUDLEY CARLETON. — MYTHOLOGICAL PICTURES. — THE PROCESSIONS OF SILENUS. — HISTORICAL PICTURES. — PORTRAITS. — RUBENS'S COLLABORATORS. — HIS ENGRAVERS.



THE EARL OF ARUNDEL'S DWARF  
Drawing (Museum, Stockholm)

PICTURES PAINTED FOR CHURCHES. — The great pictures painted by Rubens for various churches in Antwerp had definitely established his reputation, and in the first years that followed the completion of the *Descent from the Cross* we find him approached by ecclesiastical authorities who wished to adorn their altars with a good picture, important people who wanted to decorate the monuments of relatives, and Confraternities who wanted to present a retable to their chapel. Commissions poured in, not only from Antwerp, but from other towns in the country. He was asked, both at home and abroad, for pictures and cartoons for tapestries intended to adorn temples and the houses of men of quality. These years, therefore, formed a period of extraordinary activity. He built himself a studio in which he could undertake several works of large size at once; he was helped by pupils and collaborators who crowded in to put themselves under his direction. He was not yet distracted from his work by

politics, as he was to be later; he was in good health and prolific power of creation. From 1617 to 1621 his manner underwent no radical change, but merely an appreciable modification.



In the period we are now about to deal with, he freed himself ever more and more from external influences. His compositions became ampler, his colour more powerful, his light warmer; but he remained correct in form, and careful in execution; all constraint disappeared, he took a freer flight, and became more master of himself, his subject and his brush. He created with facility, and his characters came to be arranged harmoniously under his pencil and his brush. He tells stories of heaven and earth, and is never weary of reproducing what he had seen with his bodily and spiritual eyes.

THE FLAGELLATION OF CHRIST. — In the series of pictures painted for churches, of which we know the date of execution for certain, we must mention first of all the *Flagellation of Christ* in the old church of the Dominicans, now St Paul's, in Antwerp (*Œuvre*. No 269). It had been rebuilt in the XVI<sup>th</sup> century and consecrated in 1571. Seven years later, during the rising against Spain, the monks were driven from the town and their church was turned into a Lutheran tabernacle. In 1585, when the monks returned, they found their church sacked and seriously damaged. When tranquillity was restored, their first care on finding that the state of their finances would permit them to think of the decoration of their sanctuary, was to order a number of pictures from the most distinguished painters in the town. We have already said that the Sodality of the Rosary, established in their church, had had the « *Dispute of the Holy Sacrament* » painted for their altar by Rubens about 1610. Later, he was also to execute the retable of the high altar; meanwhile, about 1617, he painted a second work for the monks. In the north aisle there may still be seen the fifteen pictures representing the Mysteries of the Rosary, which were painted for the Dominicans, and presented to them by different donors. The only document that has survived touching the origin of these paintings is a list drawn up in 1651, which gives the names of the painters, and the donors and the prices paid for the pictures. Here is the item relating to the *Flagellation*. « The *Flagellation* presented by Mijnheer Lowies Clarisse, painted by Mijnheer Peeter Rubbens, 150 florins ». The painters of the other pictures were Hendrik van Balen, one of the Franckens, Cornelis De Vos, Matthias Voet, David Teniers the elder, Ant. De Bruyn, Antony Vandyck, Jacob Jordaens, Arnould Vinckenborgh and Aertsen. In the nineteenth century Rubens's picture was taken out of the series and replaced by a copy; it now hangs further on in the transept. The shutters which usually cover it have this inscription, which was placed there a few years ago: « The striking picture of the Flagellation of Our Saviour Jesus Christ, painted with consummate art by P.P. Rubens, was presented to the church of St Paul in the year 1617 ». We may suppose that this assertion is based on trustworthy documents, but we have not succeeded in discovering where the archives of the ancient Dominican monastery are at present to be found.

The scene of the *Flagellation* is laid in the prison. Christ is bound to a pillar; three executioners are engaged in the task; one of them, a giant almost entirely nude, is brandishing a knotted cord; the two others, a negro and a Roman soldier, are striking him with rods; a fourth figure looks on and jeers. The composition is simple; the artist has relied for his effect on the contrast between the white and tender Christ, graceful and a little feminine in form, and the brutal deportment of the executioners, of whom one is brown, the other black; between his calm and resigned attitude and their violent action. The gigantic castigator is on tip-toe,

with one leg behind him to give him a firmer foothold, and his body thrown back, while he raises his arm to bring the cord with a vigorous effort down on the back of the victim. The negro, in a still more violent attitude, has one foot behind him and the other against the leg of Christ, so as to prevent himself from falling forward when his arm descends again with all its strength. The painting has lost a good deal of its original brilliance, but we can see clearly that the colour was brighter and more vigorous than in the works that immediately preceded it. The attitude of the executioners, the boldness of which is full of truth, shows that the dramatic tone had taken the upper hand again, less exaggerated than in the « Elevation of the Cross », but more human and more in conformity with nature.

THE ALTAR OF THE CHURCH OF ST. JOHN AT MECHLIN. — In this same year, 1617, Rubens began a great work which had been ordered of him by the chapter of the church of St John at Mechlin, which like all the rest had been devastated and sacked by the iconoclasts and was despoiled of all its ornaments. In 1585, when it was restored to the Catholic faith, the destruction that had been wrought was little by little restored. Unfortunately, the building was to suffer so severely from the storms of 1599 and 1606 that the chapter had to employ the money at their disposal in partly rebuilding the tower and the roofs. It was not till 1610 that they commissioned the Antwerp sculptor, Otmar van Ommen, for the high altar. For this altar Rubens was asked to paint a triptych and three predellas. On the 27<sup>th</sup> December, 1616, the triptych was ordered of him by the vicar and churchwardens, at the price of 1800 florins, payable by annual instalments of 300 florins. The first payment was made on the 14<sup>th</sup> September, 1617; the second on the 12<sup>th</sup> November, 1618, the third on the 23<sup>rd</sup> December, 1619; the fourth on the 11<sup>th</sup> January, 1621; the fifth in two instalments in 1622-1623; and the remaining 450 florins were paid on the 12<sup>th</sup> March, 1624, when the painter gave the following receipt :

« I the undersigned acknowledge to have received in several payments from the vicar of  
 » the church of St John at Mechlin the sum of eighteen hundred florins in full payment for a  
 » retable with shutters for the high altar of the said church, the whole painted by my hand.  
 » In witness whereof I have set my hand to this present receipt. At Antwerp this  
 » 12<sup>th</sup> March, 1624.

PIETRO PAULO RUBENS. »

This receipt is still preserved in the church and shown to visitors as a remarkable document. The necessary funds were raised by means of four collections made among the parishioners by the vicar and churchwardens. The picture was finished long before the receipt was made out. Soon after giving the commission the vicar sent by boat to Antwerp some joiners who were instructed to take into Rubens's house the panel and the shutters which were packed in a wooden case. For the grounding of the great panel the Mechlin priest paid Jan Baptist De Vos of Antwerp 15 florins, and for the shutters and the small panels 27 florins 6 stuyvers. The shutters and predellas were finished first and the bell-ringer was sent to Antwerp to fetch them. On the 27<sup>th</sup> March, 1619, the centre panel was despatched by boat from Antwerp to Mechlin and placed over the altar. In 1623-1624 one of Rubens's pupils went to clean and varnish it.

The church that contained the altar was dedicated to St John the Baptist and St John the Evangelist. Rubens remembered these two saints in the subjects he painted for the shutters. On the right shutter he painted, on the inside St John the Evangelist thrown into the caldron of boiling oil ; on the outside the same saint at Patmos. On the left shutter he painted on the inside the Beheading of St John the Baptist , and on the outside the « Baptism of Christ ». For the remaining parts he chose his own subjects. On the centre panel he represented the Adoration of the Kings . On the predellas he painted the Adoration of the Shepherds », Christ on the Cross », and the Resurrection of Christ » (*Œuvre*. Nos 162-169).

In 1765, the chapter of the church came to the unhappy resolution to replace the original altar, which had been carved by the clever hand of van Ommen, with another which, in conformity with the taste of the day, had its principal ornament in a suite of pillars in imitation of marble, and so cleverly painted that they might have been taken for real; to complete this work of vandalism, which was completed in 1769, they walled up the side windows of the choir, and thus deprived Rubens's work of light. In 1794, the pictures were carried off to Paris, whence they returned in 1815. On the 18<sup>th</sup> June, 1816, the centre panel and the shutters were put back over the altar. The Christ on the Cross », which had been carried off in 1794 by an inhabitant of Mechlin, was restored by him later and may be seen again upon the altar. The two other predellas were presented in 1804 by the French government to the Museum at Marseilles, which still possesses them. They have been replaced on the altar by two small panels by Lucas Franchois the younger : St Rock tended by an angel », and « St Antony the Hermit visiting St Paul in the desert ».

On the principal panel, which was painted entirely by the hand of Rubens, we see Mary standing on the left, holding her Child by the hands. She wears a robe of greyish white, with red sleeves, a kerchief of light grey and a cloak of blue. She is seen entirely in profile, her features are very regular and sweet in expression, of a luminous white, and as if robbed of their colour by the rays that emanate from the little Jesus. He is sitting upright in his manger; he is of a tender pink and surrounded with a delicate light. He is plunging his little hand into the dish filled with gold, and delighting in the gleam of the fine pieces of money which are offered him by a grey-haired king wearing a rich cloak of gold brocade with an ermine collar. Behind him stands another king wearing a long and heavy red robe, richly embroidered in gold, and leaning towards the child with a censer in his hand; then comes the Moorish king with a white turban on his head, a white kerchief round his neck and wearing a gold coloured robe. He holds in his hand a small casket containing myrrh. He is looking at Mary with an anything but respectful glance. The whole group, which breathes serene majesty and sovereign beauty, is lit by the radiance of the infant Jesus, a *motif* already employed by Correggio; the other characters are plunged in twilight, broken by the diminished rays that stream from the new born babe and the ruddy light of the torches borne by two servants. Behind Mary and half lost in the frame, stands Joseph; two pages, in one of whom we recognise Albert Rubens, carry the train of the old king's cloak; in the background crowd the serried ranks of the attendants of the magi; soldiers, fourteen in number, with helmets on their brows, courtiers clothed in armour or in cloaks, bareheaded or turbaned, a negro, and two



torch-bearers; the whole group rises up the steps of a stair-case and looks on at the strange spectacle.

The *ensemble* is treated in a sweetly luminous tone; the silvery and supernatural light of the foreground contrasts happily with the ruddy and golden glow of the torches in the upper part, while the intermediate space is thick with semi-obscurity. The composition is thoughtfully arranged, and carefully managed both in colour and design, but unfortunately a little dulled by repeated cleanings; but we can easily understand that it enjoyed high renown. The central group especially is striking in the richness of its colour, red, gold, white and blue; in the nobility of the faces: a young and beautiful woman, a rosy child, the majestic age of the old king on his knees, the other king standing up, he also aged but still robust, and the fine theatrical figure of the Moor.

This was the second « Adoration of the Kings » painted by Rubens. It is distinguished from the first by a far paler light and colour and simpler action in the principal figures, which are disposed in a closely massed group, as the scanty width of the canvas demanded, but with a consummate art which a sculptor would not have been ashamed to



STUDY FOR THE HEAD OF A NEGRO (Museum, Brussels).

own. It is no less brilliant in the skilful arrangement of the secondary characters, who seem to have come and ranged themselves in their places in most lifelike attitudes and in groups which become less and less dense as they rise. The divine Infant forms the central point; around him move the mother, full of love, the superb monarchs and the variegated troop of followers. On him are concentrated the eyes and the minds of all. Unity and movement, the severest order and the most natural ease are closely combined; the picture is the happiest condensation of a vast *ensemble*, the perfect and irreproachable form of a scene that has been represented over and over again.

Rubens made three separate pictures of the heads of the three kings for his friend Balthasar Moretus, in whose family it was the custom to christen three of the numerous sons of every generation by the names of Gaspar, Melchior, and Balthasar (*Œuvre*. Nos 170, 171, 172). These pictures, which are broadly painted and powerful in colour, were bought for 150 florins the three, as we find entered in Rubens's account with the house of Moretus from 1618 to 1640. In 1658 they still belonged to the same family; in the eighteenth century they were acquired by some Antwerp nobles; in 1876 they were bought by Mr. Wilson. After the sale of

his collection, they passed through various hands. The negro king became part of the Secretan collection, which already contained the portrait of a eastern prince, exactly resembling the one which Rubens painted for Moretus and the one which he put in the « Adoration of the Kings » in the church of St John at Mechlin. In Rubens's household at his death there were found in like manner « two portraits of a king of Tunis after Antonio Moro ». Perhaps the picture in the Secretan collection was one of these two, and had served as a model for the negro who appears in Rubens's altar-piece (*Œuvre*. Nos 1067-1068).

The black slave with the smiling face, who forms part of the train of the three kings, appears again in the picture of the « Four Negros » in the Brussels Museum (*Œuvre*. No 858). These four heads seem to be studies after a single model seen from different sides. The picture, which was evidently dashed off in a sitting of a few hours, is truly admirable; it is painted with a firm hand, at once swift and sure, full of life in the expression and of movement in the colour and light. As the same time as the heads of the three kings, Rubens painted for Balthasar Moretus a « Virgin and St Joseph » (*Œuvre*. No 466) probably as they appear in the « Adoration of the Kings » at Mechlin. The five pictures belonged, until 1798, to a single owner; then they passed into different hands. We do not know what has become of the « Virgin and St Joseph ».

The right shutter of the retable of the church of St John at Mechlin represents « St John the Evangelist thrown into boiling oil »; on the ground a great fire is burning, stoked by a nude workman. An executioner is lifting up the saint, holding him by the right leg, while another holds him by the middle of his body; the martyr raises his eyes to heaven, whence two angels are bearing him a palm. The hope of celestial reward glows in his dim eyes and throws a ray of joyful expectation over his emaciated face. On the back of the shutter we see « St John the Evangelist in the Island of Patmos », his book on his knees, the hand which holds the pen raised as if it had been interrupted in its work, and his face turned towards the eagle perched on a rock. The vision of the dragon of the Apocalypse appears in a glory.

On the left shutter we see the executioner holding his sword in one hand and in the other the severed head of St John the Baptist, which he is about to lay upon the charger held out to him by Salome. Behind them stands an old woman. On the ground lies the decapitated corpse. On the back is Christ standing in the Jordan, the water of which reaches to his ankles, while over his head John is pouring water from a shell. The Holy Ghost, encircled in a glory, hovers in the heights. The principal figures recall those of the « Baptism of Christ » painted for the church of the Jesuits of Mantua.

The inner sides of the shutters harmonise in their colour with the centre panel. The « Adoration of the Kings » and the « Beheading of St John the Baptist » are lit by the light of day and the glow of torches, and in the « Martyrdom of St John » the scene is illuminated at once by the fire in the brasier and the celestial glory. The painting of the shutters is carefully executed. The tones are pale and delicate; the nude plays a more important part and the action of the figures is more dramatic. This part of the work was entrusted to Rubens's pupils and repainted by himself, especially in the nudes, while he confined himself to retouching the others. The outsides of the shutters are less interesting; here the work was done by pupils and merely retouched by the master in the light passages.

In the predellas Rubens reproduced the effect of light he employed in the principal panel. In the « Adoration of the Shepherds », a bright radiance emanates from the infant Jesus and falls on his mother and all those present ; in the « Resurrection of Christ » the body of the Saviour throws out a white light which dazzles and blinds the terrified soldiers. These two little pictures are by the master's hand, and broadly painted.

THE ADORATIONS OF THE KINGS. — About the same time Rubens painted several other copies of the « Adoration of the Kings ». One of them (*Œuvre*. N<sup>o</sup> 158) is in the Brussels Museum, and comes from the church of the Capuchins at Tournai. As in the Mechlin « Adoration », Mary stands holding her babe, who is resting his feet on the edge of the manger, and his hand on the bald head of the kneeling king. Here too the two other kings are standing on the left ; one with his hands crossed on his breast lifts a glance of respect to Mary ; the other, the Moorish king, looks at the scene with joyful and simple admiration. On the extreme right is a page of about four years old, like the one in the Mechlin picture, and showing, like the latter, the features of Albert Rubens, who was born in 1614. As in the Mechlin picture, the train of the kings is arranged on a flight of stairs that leads to the upper floor, and from these stairs they look on at the scene. The knight in a complete suit of armour, who, in the Mechlin picture, is standing behind the kings, is here stationed on the lowest step of the stairs, and prevents the members of the train from coming down. Here again the scene is lit by torches borne by the servants. Other points of resemblance might be enumerated ; but the differences are no less apparent. First of all, in the composition. Mary is not standing to one side, but in the centre ; the pages are separated, one being on the right, the other on the left ; the torch-bearers are down at the bottom ; the gifts are not borne by the kings but by members of their train. The arrangement is far from being as solid as in the Mechlin picture ; it is looser and more broken up. The lighting, too, is different : there is no radiance emanating from the infant Jesus, and the scene is illuminated by the light of the sun, so that the torches are merely ornamental. The retable of St John's church is pale and tender in colour ; that at Brussels is intense and vigorous in tone. The gilded mantle of the kneeling king, as ample and rich as a bishop's cope, and the wide red cloak of the standing king, form two dominant notes of powerful colour. These intense and luminous tones throw up the blue of the under-robe of the kneeling king, Mary's cloak and the sumptuous and brilliant coat of the little page ; the combination forms a richly and highly coloured whole. Rubens painted the lower groups in the composition, and had the upper part carried out after his designs by his assistants, whose work he revised and retouched.

A third « Adoration of the Kings » (*Œuvre*. N<sup>o</sup> 173) was painted about the same time. The scene is more widely spread out, and the principal group shows much resemblance to that in the preceding picture. Mary holds the child, who is standing on the edge of the manger and laying his hand on the head of the kneeling king. Behind the latter stands a second king, wearing a heavy turban and draped in a long red cloak over a white robe ; the negro king, who is standing in a majestic attitude, wears a blue cloak over a robe of cloth of gold. The group formed by the Holy Family and the three Eastern princes occupies the foreground of the whole width of the picture ; behind them, in the middle distance crowd the members of



the train. The action is insignificant; the painter has relied for his interest on the display of princely persons magnificently attired. Rubens's part in the painting is infinitely less than in the preceding pictures; the Holy Family and the little page standing by the side of the kneeling king and again invested by Rubens with the features of his eldest son, are the only parts by the master's hand; the rest was painted by his pupils and slightly retouched by Rubens. The Virgin is especially remarkable, a beautiful and healthy figure, dressed, for once, in a white robe, over which is thrown a sort of black mantilla. She recalls the Mary in the *Adoration* in the church of St John at Mechlin; but the painting is much finer and better preserved. We know little of the history of this picture. On the 17<sup>th</sup> September, 1698, it was sold by a certain Gisbert of Cologne to the Elector of Bavaria, Maximilian Emmanuel, who placed it in his castle of Schleissheim. In 1800 it was carried off by the French and presented, in 1805, by the government to the Museum at Lyons, where it still remains.

About the same time, again, and probably in 1620, judging from the painting, Rubens painted a fourth *Adoration of the Kings*, which is now in the Hermitage Museum at St Petersburg (*Œuvre*. N<sup>o</sup> 175). This picture is almost square, slightly wider than it is high. Mary is sitting, and holding on her lap the child, who is stretching out his hand towards the pieces of gold which fill the cup offered by the kneeling king. In this case it is the negro king who plays the principal part. He is standing in the front rank in the centre of the composition. His immense red cloak covered with embroidery, the train of which is carried by a page, fills half the width of the picture. Once again Albert Rubens sat for the page, and as he is here 5 or 6 years old, the picture must date from 1619 or 1620. In the background we see a ruined building and the train of the kings, on foot or on horseback on a stairway with several steps. The composition is distinguished by its movement and the happy arrangement of the groups; the painting is by a pupil, and slightly retouched by Rubens. The history of the picture is unknown; all that can be said is that it was bought by order of Catherine II for the Hermitage at the Dufresne sale, which took place in Amsterdam on the 22<sup>nd</sup> August, 1770.

Another interpretation of the same subject, similar in every way to that we have just described, except that it is a little greater in height and very much wider, used to adorn the altar of the church of St Martin at Bergues-Saint-Winnoc (*Œuvre*. N<sup>o</sup> 175<sup>1</sup>). It was sold in 1766 to M. Randon de Boisset and appeared successively in various sales. At the Charles Bonaparte sale of 1858 it was bought by Mr Bates.

Another example of the same period was bought in 1621 for the Archduchess Isabella (*Œuvre*. N<sup>o</sup> 161). At the death of this princess the picture hung in her oratory with other pictures by Rubens, a *Birth of Christ* (*Œuvre*. N<sup>o</sup> 153) and a *Descent of the Holy Ghost* (*Œuvre*. N<sup>o</sup> 354). The inventory, draw up in 1639, of the precious objects there collected and bequeathed by the will of Isabella to the church of Sainte-Gudule, runs as follows: "A large picture on canvas representing the *Adoration of the Kings*", painted by Rubens in 1621 for 400 florins, 10 <sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> feet wide and 8 feet high; a *Birth of the Saviour* by Rubens, which cost 300 florins, a picture on canvas, 8 <sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> feet square; a *Descent of the Holy Ghost* by Rubens, which cost 300 florins, on canvas, 10 feet high and 16 wide. These pictures were placed in the chapel of the Holy Sacrament of the Miracle. In 1706 they were sold with the works of other great masters, which adorned this chapel, to make room for wood-carvings and provide

for the purchase of new organs. What became of them we do not know ; these three pictures were never heard of again. Though the inventory of 1639 does not state that the pictures ordered by Isabella had all three been delivered in 1621, it is most probably the case, since they are mentioned together with the « Adoration of the Kings », for which this date is indicated, and also because Rubens painted at the same time for the Count Palatine Wolfgang-Wilhelm of Bavaria, two large pictures, the « Adoration of the Shepherds » and the « Descent of the Holy Ghost ».

Rubens was again to take up the subject of the « Adoration of the Kings » and give it new forms. It had a particular attraction for him, because the subject gave him the opportunity of grouping and setting in motion a multicoloured crowd of people, to which he later added animals. There is no scene to which he returns with a more marked preference, or which provided him with a more favourable opportunity of showing his incomparable felicity of narration and *mise-en-scène*.

THE ALTAR-PIECE OF THE FISHMONGERS AT MECHLIN. - Rubens had scarcely received the first payment on account of his pictures for the church of St John at Mechlin when the Guild of the Fishmongers of the same town commissioned him for a retable for their altar. The altar stood in the church of Our Lady over the Dyle and was dedicated to St Andrew. It had been destroyed by the iconoclasts in 1580, and rebuilt between 1586 and 1597. In 1613 the Corporation decided to decorate it with pictures, and in the same year Bartholomeus van Roye delivered them the wooden panels ; a third of the sum of 625 florins, for which he had contracted to do the work, was paid him in 1613 : the two remaining thirds in 1615. In 1617 the Guild approached Rubens with a commission to paint the pictures. We find in his books a mass of details about the order and delivery, and we find reproduced here what happened at Antwerp in the case of the « Descent from the Cross » and at Mechlin in that of the « Adoration of the Kings ».

On the 9<sup>th</sup> October, 1617, Rubens went to Mechlin, where he was received by three members of the Corporation, who took him to their « chamber », and thence to the church of Notre-Dame to inspect the altar. On the 5<sup>th</sup> February, 1618, two of the members went to Antwerp to order the picture. The negotiation was concluded on that day and Rubens undertook the work at the price of 1600 florins. The panels, still untouched by the brush, were removed from the altar of the Corporation and sent to Antwerp, where they were carried into Rubens's studio. On the 11<sup>th</sup> August, 1619, the work was finished, and it was sent by boat to Mechlin. To meet the cost, the Fishmongers were authorized by the magistrate to impose a small duty on the fish imported into the town by foreign merchants. The tax produced between 100 and 200 florins a year.

The work delivered by Rubens consisted of a triptych and three predellas. The central panel represented the « Miraculous Draught of Fishes » ; the inside of the right shutter, « Tobias and the Angel », the outside, « St Andrew » ; on the front of the left shutter was the « Tribute-Money », and on the back, « St Peter » ; on the predellas were « Jonah cast into the sea », « Christ walking on the waters », and a « Christ on the Cross » (*Œuvre*. Nos 245-252).

In 1794, all these pictures were sent to Paris by the commissioners of the French

Republic. The triptych alone was returned in 1815. The Corporation of the Fishmongers had been dissolved by a decree of the 2<sup>nd</sup> March, 1792. After the removal of the pictures, the altar also was demolished in 1805. The triptych was placed in a chapel behind the high altar. Two of the predellas were presented by the Emperor Napoleon to the Museum at Nancy, where they still remain. We do not know what has become of the *Christ on the Cross*.

The central panel, as we have said, represents the *Miraculous Draught of Fishes*. Christ is in a boat near the shore with four apostles. He is standing at the extremity of the boat, draped in a red cloak, under which is a purple robe. His garments descend straight and without folds, and cover him to the feet, leaving nothing visible but his head and his hands. His long hair falls to his neck, and he wears a full beard. He is talking in a friendly way to the apostle Peter, who is kneeling before him with one hand outstretched and the other holding to his breast a blue furred cap, and looking with reverence at his Master as he works miracles. His chest and shoulders, bronzed by the sun, are nude, and a blue-grey drapery covers the lower part of his body. One of the three other apostles in the boat is leaning over the edge and pulling towards him the net full of fish ; on the right another, a younger man, is holding a rope in one hand and signing with the other to a companion to come and help him ; the third, standing in the stern, is driving the boat on. In a second boat are two apostles ; one of them, obeying his companion's signal, is stepping into the water ; the other is standing and leaning on a boat-hook. Another apostle is working on the shore. He is a sturdy fisherman ; his hair is a pale red brown, his eyebrows are bushy and his thick beard frames an energetic and tanned face. He wears a vest of flame-coloured flannel which waves over his breeches, and great fishing-boots which cover all his legs. Thrown back to collect all his strength, he is pulling at the net, which lies beside him, full to bursting of large and strangely formed fish. The waves are subsiding in foam along the shore. In the foreground lie shells ; the background is occupied by the sea, the surface of which is slightly rippled, and the blue sky, in which float yellowish clouds.

The picture is now faded and blemished in several places ; a first glance shows that the inferior laying on of the paint was the work of an assistant. The three robust fishermen, the one on the bank and the two others in the boat, were the only part painted by Rubens himself ; the rest had nothing but a little or no retouching from his hand. But the three fishermen form a mighty and superb trio. Two of them, bowed down in opposite attitudes, present an image of the rudest of labour performed by the most vigorous of men. The athletic partner who is working on the shore is particularly striking, leaning all his weight on the rope, and stretching his every muscle in his efforts. He is no longer a common fisherman, but a wrestler engaged in a dramatic action, meeting an extraordinary difficulty in a hand-to-hand combat. With erect body and a strongly muscled and warm-tinted back, the apostle sitting calm and strong in the boat dominates his companions. The attitude of St Peter is touching ; and that of the standing apostle, leaning his weight on the boat-hook, is full of grandeur in its simplicity. Taken in itself, the figure of Christ, with its simple gesture, appears a little awkward. But his calm in the midst of the efforts of his human disciples reveals in him the Almighty, to whom no miracle is impossible. It is not, however, the supernatural side of the event which Rubens wished to emphasize ; what attracted him in the composition and the painting was the spectacle of the





THE LAST COMMUNION OF ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI  
(Museum, Antwerp)

Republic. The triptych alone was returned in 1878. The Commission of the Netherlands had been deceived by a decree of the 2<sup>nd</sup> March 1795. After the seizure of the pictures, the altar also was demolished in 1800. The triptych was placed in a small room in the high altar. Two of the predellas were presented by the Emperor's legation in the museum at Nancy, where they still remain. We do not know what has become of the third and the fourth.

The central panel, as we have said, represents the *Miraculous Draught of Fishes*. Christ is in a boat near the shore with four apostles. He is standing at the entrance of the boat, draped in a red cloak, under which is a purple robe. His garments descend straight and without folds, and cover him to the feet, leaving nothing visible but his head and his hands. His long hair falls to his neck, and he wears a full beard. He is looking in a friendly way to the apostle Peter, who is kneeling before him with one hand outstretched and the other holding to his breast a blue furred cap, and looking with reverence at his Master as he works miracles. His chest and shoulders, bronzed by the sun, are nude, and a blue grey drapery covers the lower part of his body. One of the three other apostles in the boat is leaning over the edge and pulling towards him the net full of fish; on the right another, a younger man, is holding a rope in one hand and stoning with the other to a companion to come and help him; the third, standing in the stern, is driving the boat on. In a second boat are two apostles; one of them, obeying his companion's signal, is stepping into the water; the other is standing and leaning on a boat-hook. Another apostle is working on the shore. He is a sturdy fisherman; his face is a pale and healthy, brownish-yellow red, and his thick, short beard is brown and tanned like the skin of a fish. He is pulling the net, which is being hauled up by the boat, and great fishes, like salmon, are jumping out of the net. The waves are a dull blue, and the sky is a pale blue, in which float yellowish clouds.

The picture of our *Salvator* was preserved in several places: a first glance shows that the inferior layer, so often used, was not made to its advantage. The three robust fishermen, the one on the bank and the two in the boat, were the only part painted by Rubens himself, the rest had nothing but a line or two coming from his hand. But the three fishermen form a mighty and curious one. One of them, bowed down in opposite attitudes, present an image of the midst of labour performed by the most vigorous of men. The athletic partner who is working on the shore is particularly striking, leaning all his weight on the rope, and straining his every muscle in his effort. He is no longer a common fisherman, but a wrestler engaged in a dramatic effort, meeting an extraordinary difficulty in a hand-to-hand combat. With erect body and a strongly muscled and warm-lined back, the apostle sitting calm and strong in the boat dominates his companions. The attitude of St Peter is touching, and that of the standing apostle, leaning his weight on the boat-hook, is full of grandeur in its simplicity. Taken in itself, the figure of Christ, with its simple gesture, appears a little awkward. But his calm in the midst of the efforts of his human disciples reveals to him the Almighty, to whom an miracle is impossible. It is not, however, the supernatural side of the event which Rubens wished to emphasize: what attracted him in the composition and the painting was the spectacle of the

**THE LAST COMMUNION OF ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI**  
(Museum, Antwerp)



Helwig: Roeloffsen, Himmerle, v. Ganten





exhibition of strength, the broad gesture of muscular men working at a heavy task, the bold attitudes and rhythmic movement of healthy bodies, employed in various ways on the accomplishment of the same work. The humble labour, with the sky and sea for setting, takes on a heroic air under his hand. He sought and found his effect of colour in throwing up several variously tinted and lighted nude bodies between the full tones of two pieces of red drapery. Nothing can equal the brilliance with which he sets these spots of red flaming, unless it be the delicacy of touch with which he has treated the flesh, and the vivid play of the light upon it.

The two shutters were painted by pupils, and a little retouched by the master. On the right we see Tobias preparing to open the fish at the command of the angel; on the left five apostles on the shore; one of them is holding the fish, from which he has drawn the tribute-money. The others are looking on. In the distance is the sea. On the outside of the shutters we see, on the right, St Andrew standing by the cross and holding a fish in one hand behind his back; on the left, St Peter with his nets.

The predellas also were painted by a pupil after the master's design, and slightly retouched by the latter. On one of them are the sailors throwing Jonah into the sea, at the moment when the furious waves are threatening to engulf their vessel. On the other is Christ walking on the waters to go to the assistance of St Peter who is on the point of sinking, while further out to sea two apostles are pulling in their net, while a third rows the boat.



ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI (Museum, Cassel).

THE LAST COMMUNION OF ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI. — In the same year in which Rubens finished his *‘Miraculous Draught of Fishes’*, he painted a picture very different in manner and one of his master-pieces, the *‘Last Communion of St Francis of Assisi’* (*Œuvre*, No 429). The scene takes place before the altar, in the church of the monastery. A priest, holding the host in his hand, is standing on the top of the two steps and leaning towards the dying man, who, supported by two brothers, is looking at the mystic bread with a touching expression of desire. Behind him is ranged a close group of friars agitated by a double emotion, reverence for the ceremony at which they are present, and grief caused by the approaching end of their spiritual father. In front of the altar, beside the priest, stand two friars with lighted torches. Above hovers a troop of angels, exulting in joy. The picture is admirable in its depth of sentiment and the magnificence of its colour. None of Rubens's works breathes so profound a religious conviction. It vibrates in every line of the form of the dying saint; the bending forward of his body,

the slight movement of his arm, the longing that glows in every feature, in his half-open lips and his gleaming eyes, proclaim clearly that he is entirely absorbed in the pious act which is about to be accomplished, and for which alone he continues to live. Some of the monks are a prey to the same emotion. They do not express it with the same intensity, the same fervour; but each of them reveals it in a different way, according to his character. The brother standing near the priest who is looking at the host with a tender glance; the old man who is abasing himself with clasped hands before the supreme mystery; the others standing in the last row and attending the ceremony with tranquil contemplation; each in his own way gives expression to the sentiment of veneration and adoration that animates him. The other impression that reigns in the group, that of grief, is revealed in one in the most patent way, in another it is mingled with fervent piety. The torch-bearers standing by the side of the priest, do not hide their tears; they put their hands to their eyes to wipe them away. One of the friars is leaning down with anxious solicitude to support the dying man. The monk kneeling on the extreme right is pressing his clasped hands to his breast with an expression of restrained grief, and all these profound emotions are rendered with striking intensity. It is a silent, but powerful drama.

The effects of colour show an art no less consummate. The background is designedly plunged into shadow, but we can distinguish a window through which comes the daylight. The frame, ornamented with mouldings and sculptures, which surrounds it, is a pale and transparent brown in which light and shade play and mingle; a ray of white light falls furtively on a column close by; the brightness tries to concentrate itself towards the front of the picture on the curve of the shaft, but only succeeds in adding a little warmth to the reflection. The wall is all dark, and this tone is carried on behind the monks to the ground; it extends also over the altar-steps, but less thickly, and is penetrated with a warmer light which gives it something of richness and delicacy. These brown tones darken not only the background, but also the robes of the friars, their necks and the shadows that fall across the chest, arms, and legs of the saint. Under the effect of the daylight the sombre tints take on infinite variety; sometimes they are sweet, tender and flaky, as in the robe of the monk kneeling on the right; sometimes they are impregnated with silvery, downy light, as in that of the monk in the white surplice; elsewhere they are more transparent, as in the shadow that falls across the body of St Francis. The lighter parts stand out admirably fine and luminous: the touch is warm and fat over the chest, cold and bluish over the limbs of the dying man, livelier over the surplice of the monk standing by him, and rich and multicoloured on the priest's chasuble, the red and blue of which are a little dull in themselves, but stand out with restrained magnificence from the sombre tone which dominates. The upper part of the picture, with the angels and the red tapestry, is treated in a more summary way and a duller tone, in order to concentrate all the light on the principal group. The friars whose part is less prominent are also painted in less distinct shades: the radiance of their faces is deadened and veiled, though very delicate in workmanship. In this sweetened light religious sentiment finds the medium which suits it, serious and tranquil, but not without warmth; all life but that of the soul is extinguished or dead; and here there is nothing but a pious act accomplished in a sad and solemn moment by a man whose life has been but love, and who is dying in a last outpouring of tenderness in the midst of men full of reverence for himself and for what he is doing.



The subject, which Rubens treated in so masterly a manner, was not his own discovery. Agostinò Caracci had been the first to paint it; then it was treated by Domenico Zampieri (Domenichino). Rubens had probably seen Caracci's work, but not Domenichino's. The two Italian painters made the dying saint an old man, worn out with age, feeble, heavy, misshapen and sunk in misery before the priest, who, with bowed back, offers him the host; the monks around him are fine well-fed folk, who appear only moderately affected at the spectacle before their eyes. In Caracci's picture the light is as dull as the colour; harmony is found in the grey sweetness of the tone. Domenichino followed his predecessor's arrangement faithfully, and turned a moving event into a pleasant scene with a garden and palace seen through an open door-way, angels frolicking in the sky, and, for spectators, handsome, richly dressed men showing more curiosity than affliction. Rubens conceived his subject quite differently, without pomp or splendour; he chose men whose bodies were enfeebled by the life of the cloister and the renunciation of temporal pleasures, living by the spirit alone; he rejected brilliant colours and rich stuffs, in order to preserve only the life of the soul, the intimate and restrained drama. What a difference between the clever banality of the Bolognese and the genius of his way of conceiving and treating the subject!

The picture is entirely his own work; and yet it would be difficult to say precisely to what period it belongs, so different is it from his other works, were it not for a document extant which informs us of the date at which it was painted. The document is a receipt given by him and worded as follows : « I the undersigned acknowledge to have received from the hands of Sir Gaspar Charles the sum of seven hundred and fifty florins, in payment for a picture by my hand in the church of St Francis at Antwerp. In witness whereof I have written and signed this receipt. This 17 May 1619.

« PIETRO PAUOLO RUBENS. »

The church of St Francis, of which Rubens speaks here, was that of the monastery of the Reformed Franciscans at Antwerp. Upon the altar of St Francis, the upper part of which was ornamented with the arms of the donor, was placed the master-piece which had been presented in 1618, at the same time as the altar, by Gaspar Charles, a member of a patrician family of Antwerp (1). The altar stood on the right against the front wall of the choir. The vault of the Charles family lay at the foot of the altar. The picture was carried off to Paris in 1794 and restored in 1815. It is at present in the Museum at Antwerp. Judging from the engraving by Hendrik Snijers, part of the original picture must have been cut off the two sides and the bottom.

Almost at the same time as the Last Communion of St Francis of Assisi, Rubens painted other subjects taken from the life of the same saint. We have mentioned already the two pictures in which the saint is represented receiving the infant Jesus from the hands of Mary, one in the Museum at Lille, and the other in the church of St Anthony at Antwerp, both painted about 1615 (p. 181). From about 1617 dates the St Francis of Assisi receiving the stigmata, painted for the church of the Capuchins at Cologne and now in the Museum of that town (*Œuvre*. N<sup>o</sup> 414). The saint is kneeling on a rock in a mountainous country

(1) *Graf- en Gedenkschriften der Provincie Antwerpen*, VI, p. 186.

before a cross laid on the ground ; a friar is sitting by his side lower down. While the saint is in prayer, Christ on the Cross appears in the clouds with wings at his shoulders and waist ; from the glory that surrounds him descend rays, which imprint the stigmata of the Passion on the hands, feet, and side of St Francis. The brilliant light which falls from heaven compels his companion to cover his eyes with his hands. Christ in his glory is really dazzling. The painting is the work of a pupil, but the head and hands of the saint are due to Rubens's brush, as is the light which illumines the Christ and several other parts of the picture. The Museum at St Petersburg contains a study made for the head of the saint (*Œuvre*. No 415) ; it is broadly painted and admirably worked by Rubens. The picture in the church of the Capuchins at Cologne was engraved by Vorsterman. The plate bears the date 1620 ; but in a letter written by Rubens to Pieter van Veen on the 19<sup>th</sup> July, 1622, he says that the plate was engraved several years before and that it was the first time he had tried that engraver. As Vorsterman had already finished nine plates in 1620, the first must have been done two or three years before that date, and consequently about 1617.

In 1618, Rubens again painted, for the church of St Gommarus at Lier, a triptych of which the central panel represented St Francis of Assisi, with Mary holding out to him the infant Jesus ; the left shutter shows the saint receiving the stigmata ; the right shutter, St Clara (*Œuvre*. Nos 421-2-3). The principal panel now belongs to the Museum at Dijon ; the two shutters are still in the church for which they were painted. The complete work was paid for with 400 florins between the 4<sup>th</sup> October, 1618 and the 4<sup>th</sup> October, 1619, including the frame, the carriage and other small expenses. A stone on which Mary is standing bears the date 1618. It is the work of a pupil, rapidly retouched by Rubens.

Rubens painted about the same time several other pictures in which St Francis of Assisi figures. First of all a Holy Family , Jesus, Mary, and Joseph with St Elizabeth, the little St John and St Francis of Assisi (*Œuvre*. No 235). It belonged from about 1820 to 1899 to Mr J. P. Miles of Bristol, and was then bought at the sale of his collection by Mr Agnew, the picture-dealer, of London. Mr Agnew sold it to M. Sedelmeyer, who sold it to Mr F. O. Matthiessen of New York. In the sale after his death it was bought by Mr James Henry Smith, who presented it to the Metropolitan Museum in New York. The Virgin is seated with the infant Jesus on her knees and St John by her side. St John is holding his comrade's leg by both hands. Behind him stands St Anne, and further on St Joseph ; on the left St Francis of Assisi, with his arms crossed on his chest, is leaning towards the Virgin. At his side we see the lamb, the playfellow of the children. In the background is a fragment of a building in a landscape. It is a charming picture, of warm colour and dazzling light. It recalls the Virgin with the Parrot . Entirely painted by Rubens, it was probably executed about 1618. The royal gallery at Windsor Castle has a replica of it painted by a pupil and retouched by the master (*Œuvre*. No 234).

St Francis also figures in the Dead Christ on the knees of his mother in the Royal Museum at Brussels (*Œuvre*. No 317), a picture which was presented by Prince Charles of Arenberg, probably in 1620, to the church of the Capuchins at Brussels. This church was enlarged in 1617 and 1619, and in place of the two altars it had three, which were consecrated by the bishop, van Hove, on the 7<sup>th</sup> April, 1620. The St Francis strikingly resembles that in the preceding picture ; the corpse of Christ is stretched out in a masterly pose, which shows the

relaxing of all the muscles under the action of death ; the surrounding group is varied and touching in the expression of its grief ; but the picture has been much damaged, and if it possesses great value as a composition, it has little signification as a painting in its present state. It was probably executed by a pupil after a sketch by Rubens, now lost ; but in its essential parts, like the body of Christ, it was painted by the master.

THE ASSUMPTION OF THE VIRGIN. — At the same time as the pictures intended for the Mechlin churches and the Last Communion of St Francis of Assisi, Rubens painted the Assumption of the Virgin for the church of the Reformed Carmelites at Brussels (*Œuvre*. No 355). The church was consecrated on the 15<sup>th</sup> October, 1614, and the Arch-dukes commissioned Rubens for a large picture for the high altar. The picture must have been painted several years later, probably in 1619. It was the first Assumption of the Virgin that Rubens had painted, and when afterwards he had to represent the same miracle again, he remained faithful in general to the form he had chosen then. In later days, after Titian had painted his master-piece, the subject was one of those which the Italian painters liked to treat ; in this country



THE ASSUMPTION (Museum, Brussels).

no one had yet represented it. Rubens was the first of the Flemish painters to choose it, and no one after him treated it with so much predilection. It was admirably adapted to his large canvases. In the lower part, compact and varied groups of men and women round the empty tomb ; at the top, Our Lady in an ethereal form throned in the midst of angels, purified, ennobled : in the middle, light, almost impalpable vapours : no subject could be better chosen to fill the vast panels of high altars.



In the foreground of the picture, (which is in the Museum at Brussels) we see the apostles, some of whom are opening Mary's tomb and lifting off the heavy stone that covers it; others are following Our Lady with their eyes with reverential admiration and profound astonishment. Mary is mounting to heaven, surrounded by a troop of angels. At the bottom is the marble tomb, academic in form; in front of it kneel two apostles, one bowed over the tomb and putting his head into it to examine it to the bottom, the other with eyes and arms raised to heaven; a third standing up leans forward to convince himself of the reality of the prodigy. Behind the tomb are two apostles, one of whom is lifting off the stone while the other bends his eyes to heaven. Beside them is a woman, also helping to lift off the stone and looking into the aperture. On the left two women on their knees are inspecting with astonishment the flowers and the shroud they have discovered in the tomb. At the top of the picture we see the Virgin ascending into the clouds, with arms extended and eyes turned to heaven; she seems to rise of her own accord rather than by any external force. Around her sport little angels, triumphant and joyful; some bear the train of their queen, others the clouds on which she rests.

It is a very remarkable work, both for its happy composition and its clear interpretation of the subject. On the earth, all is life and movement; the emotions and attitudes of the apostles differ in every case. One and all, they are robust men, who stand out strongly against the pale blue background; their full-toned draperies, arranged in large masses, fall in straight and solid folds. The women are pleasanter in form and painted in more luminous and caressing tones. The further we mount into the upper regions, the more delicate become the forms, the fainter the colours, and the more immaterial the figures and draperies. The angels forming the lowest rank of the troop which surrounds Mary are still firm in flesh and outline, and the clouds in which they hover are heavy; higher up, the clouds become less dense and the flesh but shadow, and the winged children are transformed into celestial spirits. By her attitude and expression, Mary is detached from the earth and already belongs to a higher world. Celestial glory radiates around her and she ascends in a supernatural light that falls from the summit of the empyrean.

The picture belongs to the period when Rubens translated his conceptions into clear forms, precise outlines, and colours broadly spread, which are sometimes a little dry. But this painting which combines sweetness and power is nothing short of superb in its amplitude. The flesh throughout is admirable; for example, the head and hands of the apostle kneeling in the foreground; so are the feet of the apostle looking into the tomb: Rubens has turned the heels towards the spectator, displaying them boldly in the centre and the front of his picture, to demand admiration for them as a choice morsel of painting; so again with the whole figure of the woman in a yellow robe with the roses in her hand. Throughout the group so broadly and happily constructed there is a harmony of lines and colours obtained without effort or artifice, as if it came of itself beneath the brush; the draperies of pearl-grey, yellow, red, white, green and blue, are so strong in themselves and harmonise so well with one another, that they form a powerful league of colours.

This picture is the loftiest expression ever given by Rubens to the beauty of the human body, an expression towards which all his efforts had been directed since the beginning of his second period and especially since 1613. He began by giving his figures a too academic

regularity, and making them too delicate and, so to speak, bloodless; little by little they gain in strength and health, and here, especially in the group in the foreground, as in the « Miraculous Draught of Fishes », they reach their full splendour : they are superb bodies, full of pith and life, with full and marrowy contours, bright eyes and opulent forms; the men are solidly muscled; the plump and daintily modelled women cover the canvas like flowers in full bloom; it is a banquet for the eyes, an ideal representation of Flemish beauty. The upper part of the picture is less remarkable as painting, while still admirable as composition. The Virgin is pale in colour and dry in painting, and her flesh has no transparency.

We may see once more in this picture an example of the way in which Rubens treated many of his great retables. The lower part, which is seen the best, is painted by his own hand; the upper part by assistants after his designs, and retouched by himself. We can pick out on the bodies of the angels every trace of his brush. Of these charming little creatures, those that form the lowest ranks of the group have still the firm outlines, the pearly flesh and the bright red reflexions on the edges and in the folds of their limbs which characterize the master's manner; higher up that manner disappears little by little; the flesh becomes dull, flat and lifeless. The holy Virgin, also, is not his work; we can see distinctly how he put touches of red and white on her hands to give them life, and how these touches have not blended with the ground of the painting. The glory which surrounds her and the luminous reflexion that falls on the knee which is held forward were heightened by Rubens.

He was not the first to treat the subject, or to conceive it in this manner. There can be no doubt that, when he began his picture, his memory evoked the master-piece of Titian, the « Assunta ». That picture, with Daniele di Volterra's « Descent from the Cross » and Agostino Caracci's « Communion of St Jerome », was one of the most celebrated master-pieces produced by the Italian school, since the days of Raphael and Michael Angelo. We have seen how Rubens imitated these two last pictures, with modifications, and had no trouble in surpassing his forerunners. But to measure swords with Titian was to enter into competition with one of the greatest geniuses in painting; we cannot pretend that he equally surpassed him, but we can show that he conceived the subject in a very different way. With Titian, the composition is divided into three superimposed parts : God the Father hovers in the heights, ready to receive Mary; the Virgin Mother is standing on clouds in the middle of the picture, aspiring with juvenile fervour to celestial bliss; a semi-circle of small angels take their flight to the heavens with her; below are the apostles, showing their stupefaction by broad gestures and an expression of profound surprise, as if Mary had just been suddenly snatched from them. There is nothing to explain why they have all come together in that spot. With Rubens, the tomb indicates the scene and the cause of the presence of the apostles; they have come to pay the tribute of pious memory to the spot where rests the mother of their Master. All present are divided between amazement at finding the tomb empty and joyful surprise at seeing the dead ascending to heaven; and this gives variety to their impressions and attitudes. With Rubens, the mind is less agitated, and the action more majestic and more solemn. Mary's expression of happiness comes direct from the soul. Here again Rubens has painted the state of ecstasy which we have seen him employ several times to express profound emotions. Mary is ascending to heaven in a flood of joy. There is, without question, something more reverential in Rubens's work than

in Titian's, there is more majesty in the bearing and gestures of the apostles, more fire and no less health in the beings ascending to heaven. Titian carries us away with the richness of his tones. His God the Father is a superb figure, his Virgin extraordinarily lovely; but Rubens has his own splendour of colour; he is lighter, more luminous, less heavy and therefore less material than the great Italian master. It is quite true that he was not the first to introduce Mary's tomb into his Assumption; Raphael, for instance, placed it on the earth in his « Coronation of the Virgin » after the Assumption. But the part played by the tomb in Rubens's composition is natural and has a happy effect on the action.

During the time to which this « Assumption » belongs, Rubens painted two others besides. One of them was ordered of him in 1620 for the church of the Jesuits in Antwerp, in virtue of an agreement to which we shall return, and which was concluded with Rubens on the 29<sup>th</sup> March, 1620 (*Œuvre*. N<sup>o</sup> 357). The picture was probably executed a little later, for it was placed over the altar of the Lady Chapel, which was not finished till 1625 (1); in 1775 it was bought by the Austrian government and is now in the Imperial Museum in Vienna. The attitude of the Virgin is here the same as in the « Assumption » in the Brussels Museum. In the lower part, two apostles are engaged in removing the stone from the tomb; one is raising it on his back, the other with both hands. Here also two women are arranging the flowers they have just found on the shroud in the tomb; an old woman is looking on at them. The apostles are on the right. The colouring is very rich; the effect of light differs greatly between the lower group, which is plunged in thick gloom, and the Virgin bathed in bright light. Here again the upper part was painted by a pupil and retouched by the master.

The other « Assumption » (*Œuvre*. N<sup>o</sup> 358) was painted about the same time for the church of la Chapelle at Brussels. The picture was placed over the high altar, which was built in 1617. Pontius engraved it, and his plate is dated 1624. The work was executed between these two dates and probably rather nearer the first. The composition, as a whole, is the same as that of the preceding pictures. Mary, surrounded by a host of small angels, is ascending to heaven, gazed at from below by the greater number of the apostles, while two of them and three women hold in their hands the flowers and the shroud they have taken out of the tomb. This « Assumption » only differs from the others in a few details. The stone has been moved from the tomb and placed by its side; in the foreground lie several books; on the right, we see the entrance to a cave. In general, the action is livelier: the apostles on the right are raising their arms with too simple a gesture. The Virgin hovers above with more lightness, and an easier and more agreeable movement. The effects of light and colour are managed in the same way as in the two former pictures; below, the tones are solid and massive; the great powerful masses of the apostles' drapery and their brown figures give their part of the picture a firm and severe aspect, while the airy tones of the upper part have a nobler and less material character. It is, moreover, difficult to judge with certainty of the original value of the work; it has suffered much injury from time and mankind; its former brilliance has entirely disappeared, and has given place to a chalky tone in the light parts and a hard colour in the dark parts.

(1) 1625. Junguntur Jesuitarum templo duo lateralia Deiparæ et S. Ignatii (*Synopsis Annalium Antverpiensium Papebrochii*, p. 37).



The picture was sold in 1711 by the chapter of the church of la Chapelle to the Elector Johann-Wilhelm of Neuburg and replaced by a copy, which in its turn has disappeared. The picture was taken to Dusseldorf and placed in the prince's collection; in 1794, when in anticipation of a bombardment, the pictures were sent to Bremen, the « Assumption » was put on a cart; but, being painted on panel, it was so heavy that they had to unload it in the market-place of Dusseldorf and take it back to the prince's gallery. When this was transferred to Munich in 1805, the « Assumption » alone remained at Dusseldorf. The sketch of the picture was lately in the collection of M. Edmond Huybrechts at Antwerp.

THE PICTURES PAINTED FOR WOLFGANG-WILHELM OF BAVARIA. — Towards the middle of this period, during the years 1619 and 1620, Rubens painted for the Count Palatine Wolfgang-Wilhelm of Bavaria three pictures: an « Adoration of the Shepherds »; a « Descent of the Holy Ghost », and a « St Michael striking the rebellious angels with his thunderbolt ». The letters written by Rubens to the German prince on the matter of this commission, have been preserved, and their relations continued long after the execution of the pictures. A few particulars of this foreign admirer of the Antwerp master may not be out of place here.



ST. MICHAEL STRIKING THE REBELLIOUS ANGELS WITH HIS THUNDERBOLT  
(After the engraving by Lucas Vorsterman).

The Count Palatine Wolfgang-Wilhelm of Bavaria was duke of Neuburg. The duchy is situated in Bavaria, on the Danube, two leagues west of Ingolstadt, and had been given in 1558 to Wolfgang, duke of Zweibrücken, who passed it on in 1560 to his son Philipp-Ludwig. He ruled it till the day of his death on the 12<sup>th</sup> August, 1614. His heir was Wolfgang-Wilhelm, born on the 25<sup>th</sup> October, 1578. In 1609, when the duke of Berg, Jülich and Cleves, Johann-Wilhelm, died without children, Philipp-Ludwig advanced his claim to these states, relying upon the rights of his wife Anna, a daughter of the duke Johann-Wilhelm. He had a competitor

in Johann-Sigismund, margrave of Brandenburg. Wolfgang Wilhelm tried to settle the difference by marrying the margrave's daughter in her father's lifetime. He obtained her hand, but a dispute that supervened between him and his future father-in law, broke off the match. The debate was prolonged till the death of Wolfgang-Wilhelm, on the 20<sup>th</sup> March, 1653. In taking possession of his duchy of Neuburg, he had renounced protestantism to enter the fold of the Catholic church, and his first care had been to foster the Roman religion in his duchy as much as possible. To attain this end, he displayed all the zeal of the newly converted. He had all the churches restored to the faithful of the old religion, and founded in his own residence a Jesuit monastery, the chapel of which was consecrated on the 21<sup>st</sup> October, 1618. It was to this church and others situated in his estates that he presented the pictures he ordered of Rubens.

Even before the church of the Jesuits at Neuburg was opened, the great artist had painted his large « Last Judgment », of which we spoke above, for the high altar. In fact, on the 28<sup>th</sup> April, 1618, Rubens alludes to this picture, which he had sold to Wolfgang-Wilhelm for 3500 florins. The commission for the three other pictures followed soon after. Two of them, the « Birth of Christ » or the « Adoration of the Shepherds » (*Œuvre*. N<sup>o</sup> 149) and the « Descent of the Holy Ghost » (*Œuvre*. N<sup>o</sup> 353) were far advanced on the 11<sup>th</sup> October, 1619, as Rubens informed the duke ; on the 7<sup>th</sup> December following, the painter announces that they are finished ; on the 24<sup>th</sup> July, 1620, they had reached Neuburg, where they were to be placed over the side altars in the church of the Jesuits. The third picture, « St Michael precipitating the rebellious angels into hell » (*Œuvre*. N<sup>o</sup> 86), had already been ordered on the 11<sup>th</sup> October, 1619, for on that date Rubens writes to Wolfgang-Wilhelm : « The subject of St Michael is very fine, but very difficult ; moreover, I doubt whether among all my pupils there is a single one capable of executing it, even after my designs. In any case, I should have to retouch it carefully myself ». There is no doubt that the picture was painted immediately after the others in 1620 ; it was given by the duke to the church of Hemau, a small town in Bavaria, near Ratisbon, where it was placed over the high altar. The Museum at Buda-Pesth has the sketch. The three pictures, with the « Last Judgment », are in the Pinakothek at Munich. All three are for the most part painted by pupils after the master's drawings, and retouched by him.

In the « Adoration of the Shepherds » Mary is showing the little Jesus to the shepherds who have run up to see him, and are kneeling or bending down to gaze at the child whom they are adoring with clasped hands. They are poorly clad and untidy ; one of them has passed his pipe through his belt ; a shepherdess is bringing a jug of milk on her head ; a lamb, a gift from these humble folk, is lying in a corner with its feet bound together. It is a scene from the life of people of simple condition, and simple hearts and minds. A troop of angels, small and large, proclaims on high in heaven the good tidings. The colour is varied, but the painting is extraordinarily dull and woolly ; the animals are the work of a fourth-rate painter ; the rest has been a little retouched by Rubens, especially in the lower parts.

In the « Descent of the Holy Ghost », the apostles are assembled with Mary in a hall in the Roman style of architecture. The Holy Spirit is hovering in the heights, whence fall the tongues of fire. Standing, kneeling, or stooping, with arms outstretched and hands clasped on their breasts or raised in the air, Christ's disciples are contemplating the supernatural phenomenon with joyful amazement. Mary is clasping her hands and raising her eyes to heaven in



tranquil meditation ; the expression of the figures is good, but the colours are exaggeratedly hard, as if Rubens had been working for a man of inferior taste, who preferred these effective things to true art.

In the « Fall of the rebellious angels », God the Father hovers in the heavens. Below him the archangel Michael hurls himself forward, armed with the flaming sword and the buckler which bears the name of Jehovah ; four angels descend beside him, one armed with a thunderbolt, the second with a lance ; two others are falling on the damned hand to hand. The rebels are presented under the form of a dragon with seven heads and a serpent's body, and six monsters with animals' heads on human bodies. At the top is a radiance of celestial light ; at the bottom, a glimpse of hell.

These three pictures are in the taste of those which Rubens made for export, and of which he entrusted the greater part of the execution to his pupils. He himself made the drawings for them, and, to show that he did not consider them unworthy of him, he had the three works engraved by two of his best engravers. In the « Fall of the Angels » alone he was not satisfied with the composition, and he furnished the engraver Lucas Vorsterman with a model that does not tally with the picture except in the general arrangement and the number of the figures.

Thus, during the first six years of his reign, Wolfgang-Wilhelm had had four large retables painted by Rubens. It may be asked how this petty German prince, living in a distant territory, had entered into relations with the Flemish master. We have no certain knowledge, but we are able to form a conjecture with a probability which leaves little room for doubt. During the struggle for the possession of the duchies of Berg, Cleves, and Jülich between Wolfgang-Wilhelm's father and the duke of Brandenburg, the troops of the Emperor Rudolf II had occupied the town of Jülich. The two rivals who were jointly administering the duchies, seized the town and drove out the imperial forces in 1610. Three years later, the duke of Brandenburg drove out the duke of Neuburg and remained sole master of Jülich. The United Provinces of the Netherlands took the part of the duke of Brandenburg and tried to seize the town of Dusseldorf, which belonged to Wolfgang-Wilhelm. The Emperor Matthias invited the Archduke Albert to intervene. Albert sent his troops under the command of the marquis Spinola to the theatre of war. Spinola seized Aix-la-Chapelle and Düren, and restored the position to what it had been before 1610. The Archduke Albert, therefore, had rendered an important service to his co-religionist Wolfgang-Wilhelm, who in the mean time had just succeeded his father. He came to this country in 1616 to plead his cause. As he was on the search for a painter of talent Rubens must have been warmly recommended to him by the Archduke ; he met the artist at Brussels, or went to see him at Antwerp, and so entered into relations with him.

CHRIST BETWEEN THE THIEVES. — Among the important works which Rubens produced at this time with astonishing fertility, we must include the « Christ between the thieves » known by the name of the « *Coup de Lance* », which belongs to the Antwerp Museum (*Œuvre*. No 296). The last act of the drama of the Passion is being played on the summit of Golgotha. Christ is dead. He hangs on the cross, his head bowed on his breast, calm, as if the sleep of death were for him repose, beautiful, as if, his task accomplished, his divine nature



had resumed its rights and its majesty. The human drama continues around him : the two thieves are still writhing on the instrument of torture, the good thief imploring pity, the evil one shrieking and straightening himself convulsively under the blows of the iron bar with which a Roman soldier is breaking the bones of his legs. On the left are two horsemen, one of whom is piercing Christ's side with a blow of a lance, while the other looks on attentively at the punishment. On the right, the Virgin is fainting with grief at the heartrending spectacle before her eyes ; St John, with his heart full of tenderness and affliction, is laying his head on the Virgin's shoulder and weeping like a child ; by Mary's side, another woman, Mary the wife of Cleophas, is looking at the dead Saviour with grief and wonder. At the foot of the cross, Mary Magdalen is raising her eyes and arms towards Christ in a transport of pity and love ; in the background, two spectators contemplate the Messiah.

Rubens has here created a picture which forms a third act in his drama of the Passion. In the *Elevation of the Cross*, he had painted Christ suffering and lamenting, hated and tortured ; then he had shown him, in the *Descent from the Cross*, bewailed and wept, going to enjoy his rest, with his mission ended ; finally he shows him triumphant in his death on the cross, for this image of death is indeed a triumph. When we see the God-Man rising above the altar of the church of the Récollets in the immaculate whiteness and unblemished beauty of his limbs, we find in him, not the Man of Sorrows, but the God who in death has recovered his superhuman perfection. All that surrounds Jesus, however lamentable its aspect may be, contributes to his glorification. The physical sufferings of some, the moral grief of others, the action of the executioners, the movement and emotion of all, serve to emphasize the tranquillity of the God-Man. The variety of colours in which they are clothed make an extremely rich frame for his calm and radiant whiteness.

Here and elsewhere Rubens has seen Calvary in an original and very Flemish way. With the mediaeval painters and the Italians, the death of the Saviour was a scene of restrained grief, the accomplishment of a sacrifice decreed in heaven, and preserving as much as possible an air of superhuman contemplation. Rubens takes us into the full current of life. Mary is fainting, Mary Magdalen lamenting, Longinus piercing Christ's side, and a soldier breaking the leg of one of the thieves who is writhing frantically on the cross under the frightful pain. It is a scene full of life, human, dramatic, as a northern artist was bound to see and express it. The change is followed methodically in the painting ; it is more flowing, more marrowy than that of the productions of the two preceding years. The white body of Christ, with tawny and transparent shadows, ruddy tints in the hollows and leaden tones on the legs ; the wicked thief with the superb warm tint of his skin, fat and transparent in the folds and on the prominent parts ; the vague lines of the good thief, the robust forms of the horsemen and the red reflexion of the cloak of one of them, the silvery gleam of the breastplate, the clear radiance of Mary Magdalen's robe and her pale golden hair ; the squat yet vigorous build of the dappled gray horse ; all these are admirable pieces of painting and colour, more brilliant, more complete, more varied and more richly shaded than the works of previous years. The light has become firmer, livelier, and more powerful ; it flows in waves over the painting. It throws up each detail clearly. The shadows, which are rare and light, sleep instead of vibrating, and never



CAVARY  
(Museum, Antwerp)







Heilige Kruisnagel, Rome, 17. eeuw



interrupt the pale tonality which dominates the picture, but contribute to the brilliance and the radiance of the whole.

The picture is almost entirely by the hand of Rubens ; but a few feeble passages, the head of Mary the wife of Cleophas, that of St John and the two spectators in the background, betray the collaboration of a pupil. The pupil was worthy of the master ; we cannot doubt



VIEW OF THE INTERIOR OF THE CHURCH OF THE JESUITS  
(After a picture by Gheringh).

that it was Antony Vandyck, and he helped also in the painting of the horses, which were later to give him so many opportunities of displaying his talent.

The picture was painted at the expense of Nicolas Rockox, Rubens's friend, and placed over the high altar of the church of the Récollets in Antwerp. On the pedestals of the columns of the altar might be read the following inscriptions :

On the left :

Hanc Christo posuit Consul Roccoxius aram,  
Expressit tabulam Rubeniana manus.

On the right :

Seu dextram artificis, dantis seu pectora cernas  
Nil genio potuit nobiliore dari.

1620.

(To Christ the burgomaster Rockox erected this altar ; the picture was executed by the hand of Rubens ; whether you consider the hand of the artist or the mind of the donor, nothing of a nobler spirit could have been given. 1620). These inscriptions, naturally, were placed there after the death of those whose names appear in them, but the date they mention is



certainly that of the execution of the work ; if any doubt were possible, we might allege further in support of our opinion that on the 14<sup>th</sup> September, 1619, the Antwerp sculptor, Melchior van Boven, concluded a contract with Jan Brigaude, master mason of Namur, by which Brigaude undertook for 1300 florins to deliver the stones necessary for the erection of the high altar of the church of the Récollets. Soon after its construction Rubens painted the altar-piece which was to be placed above it.

THE PICTURES PAINTED FOR THE CHURCH OF THE JESUITS AT ANTWERP. — There was another church in Antwerp which was to offer a still wider field for Rubens's art than that of the Récollets, for which he had already painted three important pictures. This was the church of the Jesuits. The fathers had founded here first of all, in 1575, a monastery with a chapel, in the house of Aix-la-Chapelle, in the Korte Nieuwstraat. Three years later, when the Calvinists became masters of the town, they were driven out ; but they returned in 1585 after the capture of the town by the prince of Parma. They occupied the same house and began to think of rebuilding their monastery and their church. The town granted them the undefined area stretching behind the house of Aix-la-Chapelle, with an authorization to cover in the canal which crossed it ; they bought a large number of houses in the Wyngaard straat and in the Kathelyne Vest, and built a church in front of which they laid out a large square. Their monastery soon rose on one side of this square and their sodality on the other. On the 15<sup>th</sup> April, 1615, the first stone of the new church was laid, and the construction was begun under the direction of Father Aguilonius, who died in 1617, before the completion of the building. The façade was erected after the designs of Father Huyssens, who had succeeded Aguilonius as architect. On the 12<sup>th</sup> September, 1621, the new church was consecrated by the bishop, Jan Malderus. When it was all but finished the superiors of the Jesuits approached Rubens and ordered several pictures of him : for the high altar they asked him for two large canvases representing the « Miracles of St Ignatius Loyola and St François-Xavier » ; for the aisles thirty-nine ceilings. Besides these he delivered them for the south aisle a picture representing the « Flight into Egypt », and an « Assumption of Our Lady » for the Lady Chapel.

On the 29<sup>th</sup> March, 1620, in the presence of Father Carolus Scribanus, rector of the College of Jesuits at Brussels, it was agreed between Rubens and Father Jacobus Tirinus, director of the professed house of the Jesuits — for that was the title the monastery then bore — that the painter should deliver before the end of the year, for the church, thirty-nine pictures to cover the ceilings of the aisles and the upper gallery, in conformity with the list handed by Rubens to the director. The director might change some of the subjects, if he thought proper. Rubens was to make the drawings himself, and have the painting done in the main by Vandyck and some other pupils ; he undertook to retouch whatever might leave anything to be desired ; he was to deliver the sketches of the thirty-nine ceilings to the superior of the monastery, or give him in place of them a picture for one of the side altars. For this work, he was to receive on the day of delivery a sum of seven thousand florins, and on the same day he was to be paid another three thousand florins for the two large pictures, the « Miracles of St Ignatius Loyola and St François-Xavier », which he had already painted for the high altar. If the sum of ten thousand florins was not paid on the day appointed, the monastery was to pay him annual

interest at the rate of 6 1/4 per cent, on so much as might still be due. Father Tirinus further undertook to supply the canvas for the thirty-nine ceilings, and, in case another picture were wanted for the high altar, he promised to give Rubens the commission; moreover he contracted to have a picture painted, when the opportune moment came, by Antony Vandyck for one of the four side altars. Rubens did not give up his sketches, and preferred to paint a picture for one of the side altars, which was placed in the Lady Chapel.

Unexampled splendour reigned in the church of the Jesuits which had just been completed; to right and left were two rows of round-headed arches which separated the main nave from the aisles; all the pillars which bore the arcades were of marble; the choir was faced with marble of various colours. Over the altar were Rubens's two pictures, representing the « Miracles of St François-Xavier » and the « Miracles of St Ignatius », alternating with the « Elevation of the Cross » by Gerard Segers, and an « Assumption of the Virgin » by Cornelius Schut. The ceiling was divided into small square compartments by projecting frames, and in each compartment was a rose-shaped ornament. The two side chapels were also entirely faced with marble, and the ceiling was covered with ornaments. The ceiling of the aisles and the upper gallery was decorated with paintings by Rubens. The seventeenth century authors cannot find terms strong enough to vaunt the sumptuousness of the edifice. Gevartius quotes the words of one of them, words which give an idea of their enthusiasm at the same time as of the appearance of the interior of the church. On the 24<sup>th</sup> July, 1622, when they were celebrating in the new church the canonization of St François-Xavier, a member of the Order published an account of the solemnity; it appeared the same year from the Plantin press and contains a lengthy description of the recently completed building, its interior, its façade and its tower. This is how he expresses himself: « The magnificence of the interior of the edifice turns the » thoughts to the abode of heaven. It is difficult to say what most strikes the eye, the brilliance » of the gold or the polish of the marble. The floor, in blue and white marble, gleams like a » mirror; the vault of the central nave is entirely covered with golden roses which shine » between an uninterrupted series of gilded frames, giving the impression of a sky of massive » gold. On both sides a double row of white marble pillars supports the arcades, some Doric, » others Ionic; both are continued throughout the whole edifice, with the exception of the » choir, and make the naves to which they give access excellent places for the confessionals. » The aisles and galleries have flat ceilings, but so beautiful that nothing would be gained by » replacing them by vaults; were they of gold, they could not be richer than they are at present. » In fact, they are covered with paintings which represent side by side the mysteries of religion » drawn from the Old and the New Testament, or else celebrated saints of both sexes. All are » executed and signed by a most famous painter, who appears to have surpassed himself in » triumphing over the difficulty of situation and perspective. The choir is worthy of this divine » palace. There may be seen a vaulting sculptured in white marble, which harmonises very well » with the steps of the high altar, which, like the walls, are faced with veined marble » (1).

(1) *Honor S. Ignatio de Loiola Societatis Jesu Fundatori et S. Francisco Xaverio Indiarum Apostolo per Gregorium XV. inter Divos relatis habitus a Patribus Domus Professor & Collegij Soc. Jesu Antverpiæ 24 Julij, 1622. Antverpiæ ex officina Plantiniana M.DC.XXII p. 13. Quoted by Gevartius, *Pompa Introitus Ferdinandi*, p. 170.*

In fact, it was a divine palace ; but a palace or a state apartment of this world, rather than a place of meditation and prayer. During the first century of its existence, it was the favourite studio of more than one painter, who did not fail to reproduce views of it. We know half a dozen due to Antonius Gheringh and Sebastian Vrancx. The tower of the church was the finest which the art of the seventeenth century had produced in this country. The façade also was very richly worked, in the style which was then beginning to prevail, and was sometimes called the style of the Jesuits, sometimes the style of Rubens. It has been often stated that Rubens drew up, entirely or in part, the plans of the church, the tower and the façade ; but the tradition is without foundation. The master designed nothing but the vaulted roof of the Lady



ADAM AND EVE DRIVEN FROM PARADISE — Sketch for one of the ceilings in the church of the Jesuits (Museum. Prague).

Chapel and the coving of the high altar. It is possible that he designed the altar entirely, but on this point we know nothing for certain. He did so for other churches, as is proved, among other evidence, by a letter he wrote on the 14<sup>th</sup> March, 1614, to the Archduke Albert, in which he says that the bishop of Ghent had chosen for the altar of his church a different plan from the one which Rubens had submitted to him.

Many of these beautiful things have disappeared. At half-past twelve noon on Monday the 18<sup>th</sup> July, 1718, the church was struck by lightning, and in three hours the greater part of the building

had been consumed by fire. All the vaults of the principal nave and the ceilings painted by Rubens were destroyed, the marble pillars in the upper gallery were completely ruined; the high altar and the chapels alone escaped and still exist in all their splendour. Immediately afterwards, the church was restored, the marble pillars were replaced by pillars of white stone, and the ceilings were plastered. In 1773, after the closing of the Jesuit monasteries, the church was despoiled of its most precious works of art. The pictures painted by Rubens for the high altar and the Lady Chapel were bought by the sovereigns of the country and taken to Vienna; the *Return out of Egypt* was bought by a private person and is now in the New York Museum. Lost to Antwerp, they have at least been preserved elsewhere. Of the ceilings, alas! we have nothing but a copy of 36 out of the 39 compositions, made in water-colour by Jacobus De Wit and engraved by Jan Punt, and a second copy in water-colour of the complete series painted by one Muller of Dresden and partly engraved by Preisler. These two copies are in the Plantin-Moretus Museum at Antwerp. Rubens himself etched the *St Catherine*. It is the sole engraving that can be attributed to him with satisfactory certainty. He had the *Coronation of Our Lady* engraved on wood by Christoffel Jegher.

To the contract concluded between Father Tirinus and Rubens was affixed a list of the 36 pictures to be painted. They were not all kept to, three of them, *Adam and Eve*, the *Annunciation*, and the *Descent of the Holy Ghost*, being suppressed. It appears that the





THE MIRACLES OF ST. IGNACE  
(Imperial Museum, Vienna)

It was not a private palace, but a palace or a state apartment of this world, rather than a place of meditation and prayer. During the first century of its existence, it was the favourite abode of more than one painter, who did not fail to reproduce some of it. We know that it served due to Anthony Verelstede and Sebastian Francis. The room of the chapel was not much altered until the middle of the seventeenth century had produced in this country. The Jesuits, who were in the process of building in the style which was then beginning to prevail, were not content with the style of the Jesuits, sometimes the style of Rubens. It has been said that the Rubens drew up, entirely or in part, the plans of the church, the tower and the chapel. This statement is without foundation. The master designed nothing but the vaulted roof of the chapel.



Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. (The ceiling of the chapel of the Jesuits at Antwerp.)

Chapel and the ceiling of the high altar. It is possible that he designed the altar entirely, but on this point we know nothing for certain. He did so for other churches, as is proved, among other evidence, by a letter he wrote on the 14<sup>th</sup> March, 1614, to the Archduke Albert, in which he says that the bishop of Ghent had chosen for the altar of his church a different plan from the one which Rubens had submitted to him.

Many of these beautiful things have disappeared. At half-past twelve on the 10<sup>th</sup> of May, 1780, the church was closed. The Jesuits, who had been expelled from the country, had been removed to the city of Antwerp.

had been purchased by the city of Antwerp. The pictures painted by Rubens were destroyed. The altar and the ceiling were painted; the high altar and the ceiling were painted. Immediately afterwards, the church was closed. The altar and the ceiling were painted. The church was despoiled of its most precious works of art. The pictures painted by Rubens for the high altar and the Lady Chapel were bought by the sovereigns of the country and taken to Vienna. The 'Return out of Egypt' was bought by a private person and is now in the New York Museum. Lost to Antwerp, they have at least been preserved elsewhere. Of the ceiling, we have nothing but a copy of 16 out of the 39 compositions made in water-colour by Jacobus De Wit and engraved by Jan Punt, and a second copy in water-colour of the ceiling series painted by an Muller of Dresden and partly engraved by Preiser. These two copies are in the Platin-Museum at Antwerp. Rubens himself painted the 'Coronation of Christ' and the 'Coronation of Christ' is now in the collection of the Holy Church. The 'Coronation of Christ' is now in the collection of the Holy Church.

The conflict concluded between Father Francis and Father was followed by the destruction of the pictures. They were not all kept by the city of Antwerp, the 'Coronation of Christ' and the 'Coronation of Christ' were kept by the city of Antwerp.







alteration was not determined upon until after Rubens had already furnished a suggestion for these ceilings, since two sketches have been preserved, the paintings of which were never executed.

Six new subjects were agreed upon after the signing of the contract : the « Temptation of Christ », the « Last Supper », the « Coronation of Our Lady », « St Albert », and the « Names of Jesus and Mary ».

Finally, the number of pictures to be painted was fixed at 39 ; there were nine along each side of the lateral nave and the upper gallery. Three were placed under the gallery against the main door of the church. Rubens had chosen nine subjects from the Old Testament and the same number from the New. They corresponded by two and two, in conformity with the usage of the Church of seeing in the facts of the New Law the accomplishment of the prophecies drawn from the events of the Old Law. He added to these the four fathers of the Greek church and the four fathers of the Latin church, seven holy women, the three patron saints of the Archduchess Isabella Clara Eugenia, the patron saint of the Archduke Albert and the sweet name of Jesus and of Mary.



THE ANNUNCIATION. — Sketch for one of the ceilings of the church of the Jesuits at Antwerp (Museum of the Academy of Fine Arts, Vienna).

These ceilings were arranged as follows. In the upper gallery, on the left, starting from the high altar : « The Archangel Michael driving out Lucifer », with the corresponding subject from the New Testament, the « Birth of Christ », the Saviour who comes to repair the evils caused by the prince of darkness ; « The Queen of Sheba coming to pay homage to Solomon » and the « Adoration of the Kings » ; « David beheading Goliath » and « Christ tempted by Satan and triumphing over him » ; « Abraham and Melchizedek » and the « Institution of the Holy Sacrament at the Last Supper » ; « Moses praying for his people on the mountain ». On the right of the upper gallery, starting from the high altar, were : « The Elevation of the Cross » and « Abraham sacrificing Isaac » ; the « Resurrection of Christ » and « Elijah translated to heaven », the « Assumption of the Virgin » and the « Esther before Ahasuerus » ; the « Coronation of Mary interceding for the world ». In the lower gallery on the left were : « St Athanasius », « St Anne », « St Basil », « St Mary Magdalen », the « Name of Jesus », « St Cecilia », « St Gregory Nazianzen », « St Catherine » and « St Chrysostom » ; on the right, « St Jerome », « St Lucy », « St Augustine », « St Barbe », the « Name of Mary », « St Margaret », « St Ambrose », « St Eugenia » and « St Gregory ». Under the gallery near the entrance to the church, on the left, « St Clara » ; in the middle, « St Albert », on the right, « St Elizabeth » (Isabel) (1).

(1) A description of the pictures is extant in the manuscript of a contemporary of the fire, published in the *Bulletin-Rubens*, III, p. 272 ; and another in the description in verse of the fire of 1718, which appeared in Dutch published by Paul Robijns, and in French by Jean François Lucas.

It is difficult to form an exact idea of the worth of these pictures. It would be necessary to see them in position to judge of the bold foreshortenings employed by Rubens to give the necessary lifelike appearance to the attitudes of the figures. In general he represented them as if seen obliquely and from one side, so that they appeared to be sloping. Jacob De Wit's water-colours give us a favourable impression of them; the compositions are simple and the figures in them as few in number as possible and painted in light colours.

Of the 39 pictures, 10 were oblong, 19 octagonal, and 10 oval. They were four ells (9 ft.) wide and three ells (6 ft. 9 in.) high. The work was ordered of Rubens on the 29<sup>th</sup> March, 1620, and certainly finished on the day of the consecration of the church, the 12<sup>th</sup> September, 1621. Sixteen of the sketches have been preserved: 'St Michael driving out Lucifer', which belongs to Mr Alfons Willems at Brussels; the Museum of the Academy of Fine Arts at Vienna has the 'Birth of Christ', the 'Ascension of Christ', 'Esther before Ahasuerus', 'St Cecilia', and 'St Jerome'. The Louvre possesses, in the *salle Lacaze*, 'Abraham and Melchizedek', the 'Elevation of the Cross', 'Abraham sacrificing Isaac', and the 'Coronation of the Virgin'; the ducal gallery at Gotha, the 'Translation of the prophet Elijah', 'St Athanasius', 'St Basil', 'St Gregory Nazianzen', and 'St Augustine'; and the Museum of Dulwich College, 'St Barbe'. Of the pictures that were not painted, the Museum of the Academy of Fine Arts at Vienna possesses the sketch for the 'Annunciation', and the Museum at Prague that of 'Adam and Eve'. The sketches are painted in broad and vigorous strokes, with a very firm hand; all the colours, red, blue, yellow, and green are laid on in clear pale tones, so that the pupils had nothing to do but finish what the master had begun. The light is indicated broadly but with precision. The panels differ markedly in size, the smallest measuring 12 <sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> in. high by 14 <sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> in. wide, the larger 1 ft. 7 in. high by 2 ft. 1 in. wide.

In the contract concluded on the 29<sup>th</sup> March, 1620, between Father Tirinus and Rubens on the subject of the ceilings for the Jesuits' church it is stipulated that a sum of three thousand florins shall be paid to the painter 'for the two large pictures of our holy fathers Ignatius and Xavier, already executed by the said Sr Rubbens for the choir of the new church aforesaid.' These pictures, therefore, were finished before the date in question; and it is not possible that they could have been painted much before, since the construction of the church was not sufficiently advanced to admit of their being put in position. It is probable, therefore, that they were painted in the course of the year 1619 or at the beginning of 1620. On the 23<sup>rd</sup> January, 1619, Rubens wrote to Pieter van Veen on the subject of the engravings, his copyright in which he wished to have established by the States-General of the United Provinces: 'I should much like to include therein certain pieces which will not be completed for some time, in order to spare you the trouble of a second demand.' He adds that most of the engravings on copper for which he asks for a licence are finished, and adds to his letter a list of the

The Dutch poem was reprinted, first by Paul Robijns in 1718, and again in the *Chronicle of Antwerp* (Johannes G. J. de Roveroy, 1775, p. 252). The author of the original poem inveighed violently against a certain priest who rejoiced at the burning of the Jesuits' church, and expressed a regret:

That the whole building had not fallen in ruins, and that then we had not seen them quit the country, banished for ever.

The 41 verses in which this enemy of the Jesuits was pilloried disappeared from the second edition and the reprint of de Roveroy. They were replaced by a second poem in praise of the Jesuits.



engravings to which he alludes. The list has been preserved. We find there the *Miracles of St Ignatius and St François-Xavier*, as well as the *Return out of Egypt*, which he had also painted for the new church. This last plate was engraved by Vorsterman and is dated 1620; the two other plates were not engraved till 1630 by Marinus. Since 1776 the two great altar-pieces have been in the Imperial Collection, now the Imperial Museum, at Vienna.

The action of the *Miracles of St Ignatius* (*Œuvre*. N<sup>o</sup> 454) takes place in a magnificent temple, which somewhat recalls the marble church of the Jesuits. Ignatius, in sacerdotal vestments, is standing on the altar-steps; by him is a numerous body of monks of his Order, among whom may be recognised his earliest disciples. He is invoking the aid of Heaven to exorcise the demon that has lodged in the body of one possessed, whom they are bringing to him. Below, in the foreground on the right, are two women with three children, and a man, who are imploring his aid; on the left a vigorously treated group is in violent motion: several people are bringing in a woman who writhes in their arms and tears her hair in the throes of horrible convulsions, her face deadly pale, her eyes wild, her blueish tongue hanging out of her mouth, and her clothes all torn. Another victim is lying on his back, with his head turned towards the spectator, and struggling on the ground. The demons are flying away through the window of the church. The calm and majestic attitude of St Ignatius offers a striking contrast to the terrible agitation of the possessed; the neutral colours in which he is painted stand out against their brilliant tones.

The composition is subdivided into four parts, which have little relation to each other, but are intimately connected with the principal figure. It may not seem natural that the group of women and children should pay not the slightest attention to the scene of disturbance and noise caused by the possessed; but the anxiety which the mothers show for their small invalids and the confidence with which they await a word or a look from the saint explain their indifference to all that is happening around them. For them and for the other suppliants Ignatius is everything, and Rubens has admirably brought out his commanding position, which gives the work its unity. The whole scene is connected in a broad and bold manner; various groups, some calm and graceful, others a prey to the wildest agitation, cover the enormous canvas, and rival each other in original beauty. The bodies of the possessed are presented with appalling violence, and a king of modern science, Dr Charcot, declared, in the presence of this picture and that in the church of St Ambrose at Genoa, that Rubens had observed hysterical attacks attentively and rendered them with striking fidelity. The composition and the drawing constitute the chief merit of the work, which, at the same time, is not beneath remark for its colour. That of the principal group is bright and well preserved; the nude flesh of the sufferer and the man who is taking care of him is warm and truly admirable; the draperies of yellow, green, red, white, and slate blue, glow with all the brilliance of their full tones, slightly broken by luminous reflections, but giving mutual emphasis by their vivid contrast to each other. The picture is as fresh as if it had been painted yesterday; the colour is even all the more striking for a touch of paleness and coldness, which it owes, no doubt, to the disappearance of the original varnish. The modelling of the flesh is carefully accented by tones of greyish blue and strongly marked transparent shadows; the outlines are clear, and the limbs very muscular but

not exaggeratedly so. The whole recalls in a striking manner the painting of the *Assumption of Our Lady* in the Brussels Museum.

The picture was not entirely the work of Rubens's brush. The painting of the background was the work of pupils. He did not put a single touch to the church and the altar that occupy the background of the picture. The head of St Ignatius he painted entirely, but confined himself to putting a little light on the heads of his disciples. The lower group is more evenly divided ;



CEILING OF THE LADY CHAPEL IN THE CHURCH OF THE JESUITS AT ANTWERP — Drawing (Albertina, Vienna).

the two possessed are entirely his work, and he painted a great part of the other figures and the group of women and children. There is no doubt that his chief assistant in the execution of these pictures was his best pupil. There is a striking resemblance between the clear cold tone of the altar-pieces in the church of the Jesuits and those of *St Martin* in the church of Saventhem, painted by Vandyck at the same period.

The scene of the *St François-Xavier* (*Œuvre*. No 432) is laid before a pagan temple. The saint, standing on the base of a pillar, is preaching to the infidels. At the sound of his voice the idols fall from their pedestals. Two dead come to life and burst their shrouds. The sick, the blind and the possessed are brought to him. The symbol of the Faith hovers in the air. The figure of St François is handsome and dignified. The group in the foreground is compact, fine in movement and brilliant in colour. The wan corpses awaking in the full light of day, and the pale-hued flesh and multicoloured

garments of the living, give a very vivid impression.

There is considerable analogy between this picture and the preceding. In both the saint is standing about half way up the canvas with a double group below him; in the latter we have blind, infirm and sick on the right in place of the women in the *« St Ignatius »*; on the left, the dead take the place of the possessed. In both the background is a temple, in which, in one picture, we see the sign of the Faith and angels bearing the cross, in the other, small angels with palms and a crown. The colour is of the same order. The division of work was arranged in the same way. The master painted the whole of the lower group on the left, with the superb risen dead and the figures standing round them; the group on the right he in great part retouched, as also the François-Xavier and the young monk standing by his side. The background was painted by the pupils and retouched by the master. Among the figures we may notice the blind man, which is a faithful reproduction of the blind Elymas by Raphael after



THE MIRACLES OF ST. FRANCIS XAVIER  
(Imperial Museum, Vienna)



and undoubtedly so. The whole results in a strongly pictorial version of the 'Assumption of Our Lady' in the Brussels Museum.

The picture was not entirely the work of Franses; much of the setting of the foreground was the work of pupils. He did not give a great freedom to the church and he also that occupy the background of the picture. The local artist hesitates for natural colour, but confined himself to putting a little light on the heads of his disciples. The lower group is more evenly divided;



THE LAST GLANCE OF THE JESUIT ST. FRANCIS XAVIER.  
(Imperial Museum, Vienna).

the two possessed elements of work, and he painted a great part of the minor figures and the group of women and children. There is no doubt that his chief assistant in the execution of these pictures was his best pupil. There is a striking resemblance between the clear cold tone of the altar-pieces in the church of the Jesuits and those of

St. Martin in the church of Saventem, painted by Van Dyck at the same period.

The scene of the 'St. François-Xavier' (*Œuvre*, N° 432) is laid before a pagan temple. The saint, standing on the base of a pillar, is preaching to the idolaters. At his sound of trumpet the whole lot seems to be moved. They all seem to be coming down from heaven. The saint, the cross and the crucifix are placed in front. The symbol of the cross is in the air. The figure of St. François is handsome and energetic. The group in the foreground is composed of men in movement and brilliant in colour. The even corpses awaking in the full light of day, and the questioned flesh and multicoloured garments of the living, make a very vivid impression.

There is considerable analogy between this picture and the preceding. In both the saint is standing about half way up the canvas with a double group below him; in the latter we have blond, brown and red on the right in place of the women in the 'St. Ignatius'; on the left, the dead take the place of the prostrated. In both the background is a temple in which, in one instance, we see the sign of the Faith and angels bearing the cross, in the other, small angels with palms and a crown. The colour is of the same order. The division of work was arranged in the same way. The master painted the work of the lower group on the left, with the superior figures and the figures standing round them. The group on the right he in great part entrusted to his best pupil, the young monk standing by his side. The background was painted by the pupils and retouched by the master. Among the figures we can notice the blind man, which is a faithful reproduction of the blind Elymas by Raphael after

#### THE MIRACLES OF ST. FRANCIS XAVIER (Imperial Museum, Vienna)







which Rubens had made a drawing in Italy, which belongs to the Albertina Collection at Vienna. One of the newly risen recalls, almost feature for feature, one of those in the great « Last Judgment », which was painted about the same time.

The Jesuit fathers proved themselves enlightened and artistically intelligent connoisseurs. They had stipulated that Rubens should hand them the sketches for his ceilings, or should paint them a picture for one of the side chapels of their church. He preferred to keep the sketches and paint the picture.

They had demanded also the sketches of the « Miracles of St Ignatius and St François-Xavier ». These were delivered to them, and went to Vienna with the pictures. There are certain differences between the sketches and the final works, which proves that Rubens himself transferred the composition on to the large canvas, or modified it during its execution. The modifications are not radical, but are nevertheless of some importance. Thus, in the sketch for the « Miracles of St Ignatius », there are two possessed lying on the ground instead of one; the standing woman has no children in her arms. In the « Miracles of St François-Xavier », the saint is stretching out both his hands instead of raising one of them towards heaven. The man with the crutch has it under his left arm instead of his right. The light is sweeter and better blended in the sketches than in the pictures; this comes from the fact that the small compositions, which are more harmonious in colour, are entirely the work of the master's hand, while the multiple tonality and the coldness of the pictures betray the collaboration of his pupils.

The altar-piece which Rubens painted in place of the sketches he preferred to keep, was the « Assumption of the Virgin », of which we have spoken already. He painted a fourth altar-piece for the same church: the « Return of the Holy Family out of Egypt » (*Œuvre*. N<sup>o</sup> 183), presented by Nicolas Rockox to the altar of St Joseph, which stood at the bottom of the south aisle. It was probably painted after the retables for the high altar, that is, in 1620 or 1621. The arms of the donor, placed above the altar, were covered later by additional ornaments. After the closing of the Jesuit monastery, the picture was taken out of the church and sold to a private collector. At that time it had already completely deteriorated. In 1872 it ran ashore in the Metropolitan Museum of New York. At the reopening of the church it was replaced by a copy. Originally the top was arched and the corners cut off; later it was made square. It represents the child Jesus, with one hand in Mary's, walking between her and Joseph, who holds him by the arm. The child is looking tenderly at his mother, who in return is casting an affectionate glance at him. In the heights is God the Father throned between two angels and looking at the group of travellers. Below him hovers the Holy Spirit.

Among the pictures painted about the same time as those intended for the Jesuits' church, we must notice first the « Miracles of St Ignatius » in the church of St Ambrose at Genoa (*Œuvre*. N<sup>o</sup> 455). This altar-piece was ordered by Nicolo Pallavicini, the banker of noble birth who stood godfather to Rubens's second son, and had founded the altar of St Ignatius in the church of the Jesuits at Genoa. Armand Baschet discovered among the papers of the Carrega family a note, which says: « In the year 1620, there arrived from Flanders the picture of « St Ignatius », painted by Rubens to be placed over the altar of the saint which had been « erected by Signor Nicolo Pallavicini » (1).

(1) ARMAND BASCHET: *Rubens à Mantoue* (*Gazette des Beaux-Arts*, April, 1864, p. 334).

The picture therefore was painted immediately after that in the church of the Jesuits at Antwerp, to which it bears much resemblance. In general, the composition is the same. St Ignatius is in prayer about half-way up the picture; beside him are several fathers of his Order; lower down, the unfortunate imploring his aid; in the middle, a mother with three children; on the right, two sick persons, a man and a woman, and a mother bowed over her dying child, which Ignatius has just cured; above, an angel is holding aside a red curtain. In the distance we catch a glimpse of a church. The composition is simpler than that of the Antwerp picture, but well filled, without confusion or crowding; the flesh and some light-coloured draperies stand out vigorously and not without a certain hardness against a much darker background. The picture is placed in so bad a light that it cannot be satisfactorily determined what part Rubens had in it; it is probable that here again he painted the lower figures and left the rest to his pupils. The work is still in the church and above the altar for which it was painted; the altar now belongs to the Carrega family.

ST. DOMINIC AND ST. FRANCIS INTERCEDING FOR THE WORLD. — Two other important altar-pieces belong to the same period: « St Dominic and St Francis interceding for the world », and the « Triptych of St Stephen ».

The first (*Œuvre*. No 407) was painted for the high altar of the church of the Dominicans at Antwerp. The foundations of the choir, in which this altar stands, were laid in 1616 (1); it seems, however, not to have been finished till some ten years later, the key-stone of the roof bearing the arms of Michael Ophovius, who was not ordained till 1626. In the interval Rubens painted the altar-piece, which in all probability dates from 1619. In style it closely resembles the « Miracles of St Ignatius and St François ». In the heights, between God the Father and God the Holy Ghost on one side and the Virgin Mary on the other, we see Christ ready to destroy the world. The Holy Virgin is stretching out her hands and supplicating her son to pardon the human race. Below is a crowd of saints. In the middle St Dominic and St Francis are raising their hands to heaven and imploring the mercy of Christ; then come St Sebastian, St Jerome, St Catherine, St Ambrose, St Augustine, St Gregory, St Thomas Aquinas, St George, St Mary Magdalen, St Cecilia and many other holy women. Here again the work was shared: Rubens painted the lower part, while the upper was carried out by a pupil, probably Cornelis Schut. This latter part shows sweet and blended tones; the sky is filled with a flaming glory, in which float grey-blue clouds and Our Lady kneels, clad in a pale blue robe sown with stars. The lower part is robust in drawing and painting; the flesh is firm, the light sweet and pure. The whole is remarkable for the beauty of the heads and the elegance of the attitudes. The picture, very luminous as it is, radiant with glowing light above and flooded below with a strong cold brightness, must have rung out like a trumpet-call above the very lofty altar. There is no trace of religious sentiment in it; what dominates this scene of intercession and supplication is neither anxiety nor anguish; it is a triumph of powerful and subtle light, pouring in waves over robust bodies. Later, Rubens was to resume the same subject, but to interpret it under a dramatic form and with St Francis for the sole protagonist. In 1794 the picture was

(1) 1616. Novus Chorus Prædicatorum fundatur. PAPEBROCHIUS: *Synopsis Annalium Antverpiensium*, p. 35.

carried off by the French as spoils of war. By imperial decree of the 1<sup>st</sup> February, 1811, it was given to the Museum at Lyons. Like all the pictures which were not in Paris in 1815, it remained in France.

The salle Lacaze in the Louvre has a study made for the head of St George.

THE TRIPTYCH OF ST. STEPHEN. — The « The Triptych of St Stephen » (*Œuvre*, Nos 410-413), was painted for the abbey of St Amand at Valenciennes ; later, it passed to the church of Notre-Dame-de-la-Chaussée, then into that of St Gery, which sold it in 1834 to the municipal Museum. The centre panel represents the martyrdom of St Stephen. The saint is on his knees, with his hands bound behind his back, and his eyes raised to heaven with an expression of desire and hope ; he wears a rich chasuble. Before him stands an executioner, on the point of throwing a stone at his head with savage violence ; another is picking up two heavy pieces of rock. Six executioners are stoning the saint from behind, among them being a negro. To hurl his stone with greater force, one of them has planted his foot on the saint's thigh, an attitude which recalls that of one of the executioners in the « Flagellation » in the Dominican church at Antwerp. A dog is tearing the deacon's robes with teeth and claws. On the left we see the heads of two Jewish priests ; above, large angels are crowning the martyr and bringing him a palm. On the left shutter is the saint preaching. Standing on the steps of a temple, he announces the new law to four priests of the Synagogue, whose faces reveal anger and the thirst of vengeance. On the right shutter, we see the burial of the saint. The body is borne by two worthy-looking men assisted by two others of younger age ; two old women are looking on at the scene. In the heights are throned the Virgin and a young female saint, who hold the martyr's chasuble.

The triptych has been considerably damaged, but none the less remains a remarkable work. The centre panel is pale in tone and painted in bright colours ; the movement in it is abundant and very varied. The figures of the principal group are Rubens's own painting ; those of God the Father, God the Son, and the angels are by another hand and retouched by him. The pupil who helped him in the principal part of his task painted also the insides and backs of the shutters ; it was probably Cornelis Schut. I recall very vividly that, sitting some years ago before the picture, I wondered to what to attribute the great difference I noticed between the centre panel and the shutters. I had already put myself the same question on several occasions, just as I had often tried to discover why there was so much difference between the upper and the lower parts of the same picture ; and while I was sitting there perplexedly examining the triptych, the light which since then has often shown me the way came upon me in a flash ; the parts which struck me by their beauty were by the hand of Rubens, the inferior parts were the work of his collaborators.

The great resemblance there is between the painting in this picture and that in the « Miracles of St Ignatius and St François Xavier » enables us to group it with certainty among the productions of the years 1619-1620.

One of the shutters, the « Burial of St Stephen », vividly recalls the « Burial of Christ » by Michael Angelo da Caravaggio, which was imitated by Rubens in a picture in the Liechtenstein Gallery of which we spoke above (p. 101).



OTHER ALTAR-PIECES AND MONUMENTAL PAINTINGS. — Some other altar-pieces and monumental paintings of less importance belong to this period.

About 1617 Rubens painted for the altar of the church of the Augustines at Munich a Holy Trinity — which is now in the Old Pinakothek in that town (*Œuvre*. N<sup>o</sup> 83). God the Father and God the Son are throned in the heights, the Holy Ghost hovers between them ; lower down, three small angels are bearing a terrestrial globe. The picture is broadly painted

and pale in tone ; but the composition is a little theatrical. It is a pupil's work, slightly touched up by the master.

In another picture of this period the Holy Trinity is represented almost in the same way, except that below are St John the Evangelist and St Paul, and there is no Holy Ghost above. It is in the grand-ducal Museum at Weimar (*Œuvre*. N<sup>o</sup> 85). Smith believes it to have come from the church of the Guardian Angel at Madrid. It has been much damaged, and is the work of one of Rubens's pupils.

We know yet a third Holy Trinity (*Œuvre*. N<sup>o</sup> 82), belonging to the Antwerp Museum. The manner in which the subject is conceived is entirely different from that in the preceding pictures, and in itself is sufficiently extraordinary. Instead of representing the three Divine persons in their power and glory, Rubens has represented God the Son as dead, lying on the knees of his Father, who is lifting the shroud with a mournful air, as if he were imploring the compassion of the spectator. Above, the Holy Ghost is vaguely indicated ; to right and left is an



THE MARTYRDOM OF ST. STEPHEN (Museum, Valenciennes).

angel in tears, holding the instruments of the passion. All the figures are rapidly painted, and so to speak in disconnected touches, by pupils, and hastily retouched by the master. The dead Christ alone stands out ; and that, therefore, was painted by Rubens. He is lying down, with outstretched legs, the right turned obliquely aside, and the left held forward ; the left arm, on which rests his head, is bowed on the knees of God the Father, and his body leans against the Father's breast. The whole figure constitutes a generally admired specimen of clever foreshortening. In the Italian school we meet with two of these dead Christs seen thus foreshortened. The best known is that by Mantegna in the Milan Museum, the other is by Tintoretto, in the « Discovery of the body of St Mark » in the same Museum, which were certainly used as models by Rubens. The picture comes from the chapel of the Holy Trinity in

the church of the Carmelites in the Meir at Antwerp. Like the altar over which it hung it was a gift from Josina van der Cappelle, wife of Jan de Paepe, registrar of the city of Antwerp. The husband and wife lie at the foot of the altar. Josina van der Cappelle died on the 10<sup>th</sup> April, 1621. The picture was probably painted in the preceding year.

In 1617 or 1618 Rubens painted another — Dead Christ — (*Œuvre*. Nos 327-331) for the tomb of another citizen of Antwerp, the merchant Jan Michielsens who died on the 20<sup>th</sup> June, 1617. The monument stood against one of the pillars on the north aisle of the church of Notre-Dame at Antwerp; it was erected to the memory of the deceased by his wife, Maria Maes, probably a year after her husband's death. The picture goes by the name of the — Christ à la paille — and formed part of a triptych, which was taken to Paris in 1794, and restored in 1815, and has since belonged to the Antwerp Museum.

The dead Christ is lying on the edge of his tomb, which is covered with a bundle of straw; his legs are covered with a snow-white shroud, the upper part of his body being bare. He is unmistakably dead; his right arm hangs stiff; his left arm lies loosely along his side; his head rests on



THE HOLY TRINITY WITH ANGELS (Museum, Antwerp).

his shoulder, as if his neck were broken. The livid tints of death stretch over his pale face, and cover his hands, his legs, and his chest, where they dominate the warm, fat tones that still reign there. His hair and beard are disordered; his eyes are lifeless and his mouth merely a hole of greenish-blue. They are the lamentable remains of a man and a martyr. All the contours of the body are edged with lines of blood. The red liquid has left traces of vermillion along the arms and hands, on the shoulders and sides; it has clotted in the hair and brows, and filled the nostrils. Comparing this Christ with that of the — Descent from the Cross —, we see in the latter the God who has kept his beauty after death, in the former a fragment of humanity, horribly injured and showing plainly that death has begun its work of dissolution. Mary is holding out the shroud above the head of her son, as if to prove that her grief is well founded. Full of woe, she raises her pale face and her eyes, that are red with weeping, towards heaven.

St John, Mary Magdalen, and Joseph of Arimathæa complete the surrounding group ; they are painted in neutral tones, and their slightly indicated features appear dulled by grief. The centre panel is entirely the work of Rubens ; the corpse and the white shroud are painted with the greatest care and stand out strongly from the other figures, which are treated more summarily and in duller tones in order to throw out the principal figure.

The shutters represent, on the left, Mary with the child Jesus, entirely nude, standing on a base of grey stone, on which lie two swaddling-bands, one grey, the other white ; he is looking with an air of indifference towards the centre of the picture. On the right shutter is St John the Evangelist with an open book in his hand and his eyes raised to the eagle which is flying towards him. Like the Virgin, the shutter was painted by a pupil, but finished in the principal parts by the master.

Rubens reproduced the panel on which we see the Madonna in a picture formerly belonging to the dukes of Marlborough, which, at the sale of their collection, became the property of M. Sedelmeyer of Paris (*Œuvre*. No 190). The Hermitage Museum at St Petersburg has a second example of this Madonna, a very finished picture, which is entirely by Rubens's own hand, and dates from the same period as the picture in the Antwerp Museum.

A third « Dead Christ » (*Œuvre*. No 317), belonging to the same period, is that in the Brussels Museum, of which we spoke above, in which St Francis appears among the afflicted (see p. 228). A fourth occurs in the Christ laid in the tomb, a sketch belonging to the Pinakothek at Munich (*Œuvre*. No 332). Christ is stretched on a stone before the entrance to the sepulchre. St John is supporting his head and one arm, Mary is holding the other arm, and looking up to heaven with an expression of profound grief. The sketch, which is coloured and full of light, is broadly painted ; the figures stand out brilliantly against the background of brownish gray, and the shadows on the modelling of the body are of a brownish black. The pale figure of Christ is stretched on its white shroud in an ungraceful attitude, but the *ensemble* of the composition is very happy. We do not know the picture for which this painting was to serve as a study. Michel says that over the altar of the church of the Capuchins at Cambrai there was a Laying in the tomb (*Œuvre*. No 323<sup>(2)</sup>) ; we do not know what has become of it. It appears in a picture called The studio of Rubens which is in the Pitti palace in Florence.

In 1620 Vorsterman engraved an Adoration of the Shepherds (*Œuvre*. No 150), which had just been painted and is now in the Museum at Rouen. Rubens had entrusted the work to a pupil and confined himself to retouching it. The picture was taken to Paris as loot from the countries conquered by the French Republic ; in 1803, when it was given to the Rouen Museum, it was held to have come from the Netherlands. According to J. F. M. Michel, it was formerly over the altar of the church of the Capuchins at Aix-la-Chapelle. The Holy Family, with the ox and the ass, are on the right ; on the left is a group of three shepherds and three shepherdesses. One of the latter has taken an egg from her basket and is offering it to the child ; the other figures are in a humble and reverential attitude ; two of them, with clasped hands and bare heads, are gazing at the child. Rubens drew three studies for the shepherdess offering the egg. They are in the Albertina. The same figure appears in the Achilles among the daughters of Lycomedes.



It is probable that about the same time or a little later he painted the Adoration of the Shepherds \* (*Œuvre*. N<sup>o</sup> 151), which is now in the church of the Magdalen at Lille. The group of the Holy Family is the same. The shepherdess with the egg does not occur here, but the old woman and the man with his hat in his hand are reproduced with little alteration ; the two other figures differ considerably. The picture was painted for the church of the Capuchins at Lille; after the French Revolution it was given to the church of the Magdalen. It is hung so high and in so bad a light that one can form no idea of it. Our knowledge of when it was painted is no more exact; we only know that it was engraved in a missal published at Antwerp in 1627. (1)

The \* Birth of Christ \* (*Œuvre*. N<sup>o</sup> 148), which we know from the engraving by Schelte à Bolswert, and the \* Marriage of Mary and Joseph \* (*Œuvre*. N<sup>o</sup> 142), which is only preserved in a plate by the same engraver and in various replicas, also appear to us have been painted about 1620.

At the same time Rubens painted for altars the \* Holy Virgin receiving the homage of four repentant sinners and other saints \* (*Œuvre*. N<sup>o</sup> 209), a picture which is in the Museum at Cassel, where it is now attributed to Antony Vandyck, as it was in 1749, when it was bought for the grand-ducal collection. The composition is thoroughly characteristic of Rubens; he gives St Dominic the features of Father Ophovius, who is held to have been his confessor; he gives the little John and the infant Jesus the features of his two little sons, Albert, then aged five, and Nicolas, who was a year old; so that the work must have been painted in 1619. In the inventory of Rubens's goods there occurs a large canvas, the \* Penitent Sinners \*, which is N<sup>o</sup> 160 in the list of his pictures. In the Cassel picture the Virgin is sitting, with the infant Jesus standing on her knee; the four penitents, the Prodigal Son, Mary Magdalen, St Augustine, and king David are paying him homage. Beside them we see again St Francis, St Dominic and St George. Of all these figures those of the Prodigal Son and Mary Magdalen are the best and are certainly due to Rubens's own hand, the others have been more or less retouched by him. Though evidently intended to be used as an altar-piece, the picture found a place nowhere. The Hermitage Museum at St Petersburg has a replica of it painted by a pupil and slightly retouched by the master.

Rubens painted a \* Christ triumphing over Death and Sin \* (*Œuvre*. N<sup>o</sup> 378) for the tomb of Jeremias Cock and his family, in the choir of the church of St Walburga at Antwerp. During the French Revolution the picture disappeared and became private property. In 1897 it belonged to M. Charles Sedelmeyer, the picture-dealer, of Paris. It has been much damaged and is not one of Rubens's chief works; it is arranged with simplicity and painted with a light hand; the picture was produced with the collaboration of pupils, and yet there is a grandeur in the composition and an air of distinction which clearly show the inspiration Rubens put into his productions, even those that were most simple and almost decorative in character. Christ is sitting on his tomb in the attitude of one celebrating a triumph. The upper part of his body is nude, there is a white linen cincture round his waist, and a red drapery is placed over his knees and falls in folds over his right arm. His left hand rests on the stone of the tomb; in his

(1) *Missale Romanum*. Antverpiæ apud Societatem Librorum Officii Ecclesiastici, 1627, fol.

right hand the Saviour holds a small white flag on which is a red cross. Three angels fly about him; one holds a crown of laurel and another a palm, while the third is blowing a trumpet which awakens the dead under Christ's feet. On the right the flames are rising from the mouth of hell. Christ is the image of a conqueror; he is throned there in the full consciousness of his power, his large eyes open, as if he was astonished at being born again into a new

existence; the world to which he is now returning, not as a martyr but a victor, seems to him like a vision. The angels dart through the sky in graceful flight; their movement, Christ's banner and his floating drapery, fill the whole space in the happiest way and emphasize still further the majestic calm of the Christ.

Rubens painted this subject more than once. A second Triumphant Christ belongs to Mr. Hermann Linds (Bridgeport U. S.); the composition is generally the same, but the angel who sounds the trumpet holds here the shroud of the Christ. The figures are by Rubens's hand and the painting is of real merit. In several sales, the last of which known to us was the Robit sale (Paris, 1801) there appeared a third copy. (*Œuvre*.



SIR DUDLEY CARLETON, engraved after the picture by Mierevelt.

Nº 379). H. M. the king of the Belgians owns the sketch (*Œuvre*. Nº 380) of another picture, an altar-piece of the same composition, which was sold in 1777 with the works that were taken from the Jesuit churches in this country.

Rubens painted a St Joseph, at the cost of the Archdukes Albert and Isabella, for the Altar of the Carmelite monastery in the forest of Morlane near Namur (*Œuvre*. Nº 465). On the 29<sup>th</sup> March, 1621, he received the sum of 530 florins on account of the price. The picture is mentioned in the catalogue of the Munro sale (London, 1878), and is only known to us by an anonymous engraving published by G. Donck, and by a copy which belongs to the church of the Jesuits at Cologne. The saint is represented carrying Jesus in his arms and



holding a lily in his hand. He is raising his eyes to heaven, where the Holy Trinity appears to him. Near him on one side is an angel carrying flowers in his lifted robe and offering them to the child ; on the other side are two small angels also bringing flowers.

#### RUBENS AND SIR DUDLEY CARLETON.

During the half-dozen years of which we have just spoken the history of Rubens is the history of his works. So long as we were concerned with pictures painted for churches, we have been able to discover certain information about their origin. Sometimes the account-books of the Guilds or ecclesiastical persons, and sometimes the inscriptions on altars or tombs, have enabled us to fix with certainty the date of several pictures and settle that of others with some probability by a comparison of style. The authenticity of these pictures was historically proved, so long as they remained in the churches for which they were painted. These precious documents are lacking in the case of pictures ordered or purchased by private buyers. For the most part, the painting is the only consideration which enables us to determine the period to which they belong ; the names of the engravers and the periods at which their plates appeared throw a little light on the dates of some ; Rubens's correspondence or other documents give information on some others, but their number is deplorably small.

We will begin, therefore, by relating here what may be learned from Rubens's correspondence about his life and works from 1616 to 1621. Information of particular interest occurs in the documents relative to his negotiations with Sir Dudley Carleton. By a happy chance the letters exchanged between him and Rubens, as well as his diplomatic correspondence in which the painter is spoken of, have been preserved in the Public Record Office of the kingdom of England.

In September, 1616, Sir Dudley Carleton went to settle at The Hague. He had only been there a few weeks when he directed Tobie Matthew, an Englishman by birth, who had settled at Louvain and was under Sir Dudley Carleton's protection and employed by him as his agent in the purchase of works of art, to offer Rubens a « chaîne » of diamonds of Lady Carleton's in exchange for a picture by the Antwerp master. On the 9<sup>th</sup> October, 1616, Matthew informs Carleton of the reception given by Rubens to his proposition. The picture on which the choice of the English diplomat fell represented « Europeans hunting the wolf and fox ». The canvas, which was exceptionally large, measured 18 ft. long by 11 to 12 ft. high. Rubens asked £ 80 sterling for it, and as the chain was only worth £ 50, Carleton had to supply the other £ 30. He did not consent immediately ; and in the meantime Rubens sold his picture to the duke of Aerschot. But he painted a reduced copy of it, and offered it to Tobie Matthew in exchange for the chain. The bargain was concluded. In April, 1617, Rubens's new picture was largely finished, and in July it was ready to be delivered. In the course of these negotiations with Rubens and through his agency, Carleton also bought pictures by Jan Breughel, Frans Snijders and Sebastian Vranckx. Passing through Antwerp in 1616 he had no doubt seen the altar-pieces and probably other works by Rubens, which had given him a taste for the master's paintings. He had long been an enthusiastic and enlightened lover of art. During his residence in Italy he had bought a considerable number of pieces of ancient sculpture, which



were sent him in 1617 from Venice to The Hague. Rubens, who was himself a very great admirer of ancient marbles, was informed, before the 1<sup>st</sup> November of that year, of the arrival of these treasures, and immediately conceived the idea, with George Gage, another agent of Carleton's, of going to The Hague to see the sculptures. Gage had to go to Spain, and the visit had to be given up; but matters were not to end there. Rubens soon learned that Carleton was desirous of having some of his pictures, and that he was disposed to give his marbles in exchange. He lost no time. There was then at Antwerp a Haarlem painter named Frans Pietersz De Grebber, who also carried on business in works of art and whom Rubens must have met at Haarlem, when, a few years before, he made a short excursion into Holland. He found in him a skilful man of business, and had probably tested him before employing him in his negotiations with Carleton. In fact, in the letter he gave him on the 17<sup>th</sup> March, 1618, for the English ambassador, he calls him a worthy and good man in whose honesty he might have every confidence. In that letter he also asks Carleton to show the marbles to De Grebber and allow him to send him a note of them. The exchange, which was not an unimportant one, was soon concluded. On the 28<sup>th</sup> April, 1618, Rubens wrote to Dudley Carleton to express his confidence in the happy issue of the bargain. The owner of the antique statues had told him the price he himself had paid for them, and Rubens had sent him a list of the pictures he had to dispose of. Most of them were finished, and the painter undertook to finish those which still wanted something done to them, or to replace them by others at Carleton's choice. Carleton asked 6000 florins for his antiques. Rubens offered him twelve of his pictures for a lump sum of 6850 florins. The list of these pictures is a document of the greatest importance in the history of Rubens; we give it here, therefore, in its entirety.

500 florins. A Prometheus bound on Mount Caucasus; with an Eagle which pecks his liver. Original, by my hand, and the Eagle done by Snyders. 9 ft. high by 8 ft. wide.

600 florins. Daniel amidst many Lions, taken from the life. Original, the whole by my hand. 8 ft. high by 12 ft. wide.

600 florins. Leopards, taken from the life, with Satyrs and Nymphs. Original, by my hand, except a most beautiful Landscape, done by the hand of a master skilful in that department. 9 ft. high by 11 ft. wide.

500 florins. A Leda, with Swan and a Cupid. Original, by my hand. 7 ft. high by 10 ft. wide.

500 florins. Crucifixion, large as life, esteemed perhaps the best thing I have ever done. 12 ft. high by 6 ft. wide.

1200 florins. A Last Judgment, begun by one of my scholars, after one which I did in a much larger form for the most serene Prince of Neubourg, who paid me three thousand five hundred florins cash for it; but this, not being finished, would be entirely retouched by my own hand, and by this means will pass as original. 13 ft. high by 9 ft. wide.

500 florins. St Peter taking from the fish the money to pay the tribute, with other fishermen around; taken from the life. Original, by my hand. 7 ft. high by 8 ft. wide.

600 florins. A Hunt of men on horseback and Lions, commenced by one of my pupils, after one that I made for His most Serene, of Bavaria, but all retouched by my hand. 8 ft. high by 11 ft. wide.

50 florins each. The Twelve Apostles, with a Christ, done by my scholars, from originals

by my own hand, which the Duke of Lerma has, each having to be retouched by my hand throughout. 4 ft. high by 3 ft. wide.

600 florins. A picture of an Achilles clothed as a woman, done by the best of my scholars, and the whole retouched by my hand, a most brilliant picture, and full of many beautiful young Girls. 9 ft. high by 10 ft. wide.

300 florins. A St Sebastian, naked, by my hand. 7 ft. high by 4 ft. wide.

300 florins. A Susanna, done by one of my scholars, the whole, however retouched by my hand.

Of the twelve pictures mentioned in this list we only know five with any certainty. These five are the Prometheus, Daniel in the lions' den, The twelve Apostles, Achilles dressed as a girl, and St Sebastian. It is quite possible that the Leopards with nymphs and satyrs still exists; but even then half the pictures mentioned in the list are lost, which proves how many of the master's works have not come down to us at all. It is interesting to establish Rubens's own acknowledgment of the large amount of help he received from his pupils and collaborators. Of the twelve things he enumerates, he himself admits that only five are his own painting: Daniel, Leda, Christ on the Cross, St Peter and St Sebastian. As a general rule, therefore, he painted unaided less than half of his works. In one of the seven remaining pictures Snyder painted an eagle, in another the background was by a landscape-painter, three of them were replicas of former works, painted by his pupils and retouched by himself, two had been begun by his pupils and completed by the master. The list apprises us that Rubens valued his ordinary works at from 500 to 600 florins, or about £ 120 to £ 144 in the present value. To justify so high a price, he states that the picture was entirely his own painting, though he did not ask much less for those on which a collaborator had worked, especially when the collaborator was his best pupil, Antony Vandyck.

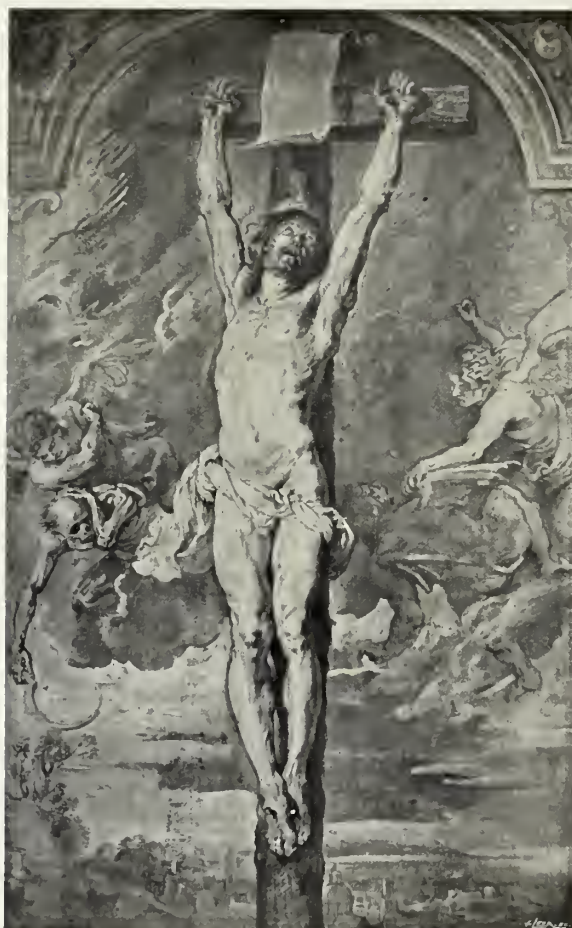
According to Rubens, a picture painted entirely by himself ought to cost double the price of one in which some one else had collaborated (1). That was the rule, but it had its exceptions. In fact, we see in the list of pictures he offered Dudley Carleton, that the Achilles among the daughters of Lycomedes, painted by Vandyck and retouched by Rubens, was valued at 600 florins, while his Daniel, which was a little larger and entirely his own work, was estimated at the same price.

In his reply, Carleton declares that he only wants pictures of Rubens's painting, including among them those in which the accessories were carried out by specialist collaborators. He accepted the Prometheus, Daniel, the Satyr and tigers, Leda, St Peter and St Sebastian. He refused the Christ on the Cross as too large. The total cost of the pictures chosen, therefore, did not exceed 3000 florins, and he offered to take some tapestries in payment of half the value of the marbles. Thereupon Rubens proposed to let him have pictures to the amount of 4000 florins instead of 3000, and to make up the remaining 2000 florins in tapestries. It was agreed that Carleton should accept in addition the Susannah and the

(1) But as to gainsaying what I have said, to our Judges, to wit that the Picture is not worth as much, that is not my way of acting. For if the picture had been painted entirely by my own hand, it would be well worth twice as much. (Letter from Rubens to William Trumbull, 26th January, 1621. *Correspondance*, II, p. 273)

«Lion-hunt», estimated at 900 florins the two, and that Rubens should paint a small picture for the odd 100 florins, and put 2000 florins at Carleton's disposal to pay for the tapestries he should choose. Carleton finally accepted, for 100 florins, the «Abraham driving out Hagar», and chose tapestries on sale at the Antwerp merchants', to the amount of 2000 florins.

On the 1<sup>st</sup> June, 1618, the nine pictures were packed and dispatched; three days earlier,



THE CHRIST «AU COUP DE POING» — Drawing  
(Museum, Rotterdam).

Carleton had sent off the marbles from The Hague to Antwerp, through the medium of Frans Pietersz De Grebber. We can tell what these marbles were from the inventory of the sculptures sent to Carleton in 1617 from Venice to The Hague. The list comprises 21 large statues, 8 statues of children, 4 torsos, 57 heads, of which 12 were small, 17 pedestals or plinths, one large and 4 small urns, 4 bas-reliefs, 6 feet, one hand, one inscribed stone and a statuette of St Sebastian. To these must probably be added 18 busts of Roman emperors, sent to Carleton from Brussels in 1616. Rubens thus acquired a whole museum of antiquities at a moderate price. It was difficult to bestow them in his house, enormous as it was. It was probably for that purpose that he built in his garden the Pantheon, which was to serve as his museum. He did not keep his marbles long. In 1625, he sold them, with other works of art, to the duke of Buckingham, keeping only a few fine antique heads, among which were probably those he brought back from Italy. These heads were the only marbles that appeared in the inventory of his works of art after

his death. Rubens's cabinet of antiquities soon became famous among amateurs. The most famous of them, Nicolas Peiresc, wrote about it on the 17<sup>th</sup> January, 1620, to his Antwerp friend, Gaspar Gevartius: «I should much like to take a journey into your country to see Rubens's collection, and especially his fine heads of Seneca, Cicero, and Chrysippus, of which I should ask him, if it were possible, for a small sketch». Later, Rubens became a great collector of engraved stones, cameos and «agates» as he usually calls them, which he left to his sons Albert and Nicolas.

• The correspondence between Rubens and Carleton on the subject of the antique sculptures had scarcely closed, when other negotiations were opened between them. A friend of the English envoy's, Lord Danvers, invited him, on the 12<sup>th</sup> July, 1619, to exchange an Italian



picture in his possession representing the « Creation », by Bassano, for a picture by Rubens which he proposed to present to the heir of the throne of England, the future Charles I. A hunting-piece was asked for, and Rubens promised one with lions and tigers, and huntsmen on foot and on horseback, like that in the possession of the duke of Bavaria, but smaller, on condition that he was paid in addition 100 « Philips », that is to say 250 florins. Sir Dudley Carleton's agents, William Trumbull and Tobie Matthew, found this price excessive, and were of opinion that eighty ducats or 208 florins would be quite sufficient. Rubens declared that he did not want to haggle, and that he would refer it to the judgment of Carleton. They agreed.



THE LION-HUNT — Drawing (Louvre, Paris).

On the 25<sup>th</sup> November, the picture was finished, on the 28<sup>th</sup> January, 1621, it was packed and ready to be sent off. Rubens stated that he had not painted it all himself, but had retouched it all over. Carleton's agents who had seen it two months before declared that it did « scarce looke like a thing y<sup>t</sup> is finished and y<sup>t</sup> colorito of it did little please ». When the picture arrived in London, the connoisseurs were unanimous in declaring that the master had hardly touched it, and that the prince could not accept it for his gallery. Charles already had a picture which Rubens disowned, « Judith and Holofernes », and only wanted a work recognized by the painter himself as a master-piece. Whereupon Rubens declared himself ready to deliver a hunting-scene entirely painted by his own hand and much better than his Judith, which was a youthful work. At the same time, he gave them to understand that he was prepared to paint the ceiling of the banqueting-hall of the new palace of Whitehall. The defective hunting-scene was returned to him and the new one ordered; we do not know if he ever painted it. On the

1<sup>st</sup> May, 1623, he returned Lord Danvers his *Creation* by Bassano, after having restored it thoroughly. Lord Danvers had instructed Trumbull to ask Rubens for his own portrait, a request which Rubens gratified later.

### HUNTING-PIECES.

The earliest in date of the pictures mentioned by Rubens to Carleton is a *Wolf and fox hunt*. As we saw above, it was already finished on the 9<sup>th</sup> October, 1616. The Archduke Albert would have bought it but for its exceptional size; it measured in fact 18 ft. wide by 12 ft. high. The duke of Aerschot bought it soon afterwards, for, on the 16<sup>th</sup> February, 1617, it was in his possession (*Œuvre*. N<sup>o</sup> 1158). He had paid £100 sterling for it. We do not know what has become of this colossal canvas; all we know of it is from reduced reproductions. Rubens painted the first for Dudley Carleton in exchange for a chain of diamonds belonging to his wife. It was acquired later by Lord Methuen, and placed in his house, Corsham Court (*Œuvre*. N<sup>o</sup> 1157); it was 6 ft. 7 in. high by 9 ft. 2. wide, and was finished on the 1<sup>st</sup> November, 1617. A second reproduction, belonging to Lord Ashburton, in London, appears to date from the same year (*Œuvre*. N<sup>o</sup> 1156); according to Smith, it was sent from Spain, where it had been in the house of the Altimera family, to Paris to be sold by public auction. Smith bought it there in 1820. A third reproduction formed part of the Jussupoff collection at St Petersburg; it was painted in Rubens's studio and retouched by the master (*Œuvre*. N<sup>o</sup> 1156).

As in all his hunting-pieces, Rubens set himself here to paint a battle to the death joined between animals and hunters. Some of the dramas he sets forth are more stirring than others, but all are full of movement. In the hunted animals he gives play, sometimes to anguish when they find themselves on the point of being brought to bay, and sometimes fury, when from being attacked they turn to attack, and the rage with which they throw themselves on men and horses, to tear them with their claws and teeth. In the hunters, the artist displays, in the attack and the battle, the courage which often degenerates into foolhardiness, the fear with which the man finds himself in danger, and the savage passion that urges on the struggle for existence. The terrified or maddened animals, the men attacking boldly or perishing miserably, the neighing horses that prance or kick, the dogs running, biting, or wounded and tossed into the air, form compact groups, inextricably mingled, in which beasts and men, swept onwards by the boldest movements, risk all to win all in a pitiless struggle.

The *Wolf and Fox hunt* is the least impetuous of all. In the centre of the composition two wolves are brought to bay by the hunters; one of them rears up howling on its hind paws, while one of the unmounted hunters thrusts his spear into its jaws; the other is crouching in terror, while a hound is fixing his teeth in its neck, and the horse of one of the huntsmen, who comes upon it sword in hand, is on the point of striking it with his hooves. We see also three foxes, already killed or hiding in terror. On right and left the hounds run up. The combat is near its end, the hunters form a circle: on the left are two men on foot armed with spears; behind, an assistant huntsman coming up on horseback, and three men, one of whom is blowing loudly on his horn; on the right are the knight and the noble lady in whose honour the hunt is taking place. The composition is carefully arranged, and is distin-

guished by its great unity and a rhythm which does not exclude vigour of movement. It is chiefly known from the excellent engraving by Soutman. Lord Ashburton's copy is not free from collaboration in the work, but the painting of master and of pupils are perfectly blended; the colours are bright and spread in large masses, the outlines clearly marked, and the wolves exceedingly well painted.

The second hunting-piece noticed in Rubens's letters to Carleton is a « Lion-hunt ». In the list of pictures offered by the master to the English envoy we find mention of a « Hunt of men on horseback and Lions, commenced by one of my pupils, after one that I made for His most Serene, of Bavaria, but all retouched by my hand ». Before the 28<sup>th</sup> April, 1618, therefore, the day on which this list was made out, Rubens had painted a first « Lion-hunt », and his studio contained a second, which he had retouched. Between 1619 and 1621, as we have seen, Rubens treated with Dudley Carleton for the exchange of a third « Lion-hunt » for a « Creation » by Bassano belonging to Lord Danvers; Rubens's picture was dispatched in March, 1621, to England. When it was returned to him in September, 1621, he had finished a fourth « Lion-hunt » for Lord Digby, who wished to present it to the Marquis of Hamilton.

We do not know for certain what became of all these « Lion-hunts ». The one Rubens painted for the Elector Maximilian, duke of Bavaria, is in the Pinakothek at Munich (*Œuvre*. N<sup>o</sup> 1150). In the first half of the seventeenth century, Cardinal Richelieu had a replica of it, which his nephew, the duc de Richelieu, inherited. The sketch is in the Hermitage Museum at St Petersburg. Other replicas or copies still exist elsewhere, among others one in the Plantin-Moretus Museum. The work was engraved by Schelte a Bolswert. Soutman engraved a second « Lion-hunt » after the picture which belonged to Lord Northwick and might well be the one painted for Lord Digby (*Œuvre*. N<sup>o</sup> 1153). Suyderhoef engraved a third « Lion-hunt », the original of which belongs to the Dresden Museum (*Œuvre*. N<sup>o</sup> 1154) and a replica of which, with certain modifications, may now be seen in the Corsini palace at Rome (*Œuvre*. N<sup>o</sup> 1155).

In the « Lion-hunt » of the Munich Pinakothek, seven men, four of them mounted, are fighting with a lion and a lioness. The struggle has reached a paroxysm of fury; the lion has hurled himself upon one of the horsemen, unseated him and thrown him from his horse. His legs are not yet free of the saddle, but his hands are touching the ground. The lion has fixed one of his paws in the horse's side, and the horse rears, neighing; with the other paw he is tearing the man's chest, while he gnaws his thigh. The head of the horseman, who is shrieking with pain, almost touches the ground. Three horsemen are flying to succour their companion; two of them are piercing the lion with their spears, while the third strikes him with his sword. Their horses are wild with terror; they look on at the perilous struggle with ears erect, dilated nostrils and flowing manes. The light bay, ridden by a man in a breastplate, backs in terror; the dark bay, whose rider wears a turban, is kicking with both feet, and the dappled grey, which is ridden by a negro, gallops off in desperate flight. On the left, the lioness has thrown a huntsman to the ground; he is trying to plunge his knife into her jaws, while a second is running to his assistance. On the other side lies the corpse of one of the combatants. The scene takes place on a level plain under a sky in which grey-blue clouds are floating. The colour is light against a pale background. The different tints are clearly separated, the brush-



work light and without retouches, and decoratively treated. Rubens made use of his pupils' assistance. He painted the principal figures himself. The man who lies stretched on the ground, sword in hand, with the upper part of his body in full light, is a most exquisite piece of painting, entirely by the master's hand, and one of the best he ever did. The falling horseman is also his.

This is not the first time we find horses playing a great part in Rubens's work. We learn



THE BOAR-HUNT — Sketch (Museum, Dresden).

from a letter from his nephew Philip to de Piles that he was a great lover of horsemanship. « As long as his age permitted him », he says, « he took pleasure in riding a Spanish jennet » (1). We know two of his horses ; one is the dapple-grey with a long tail and a white mane which we meet in the « Lion-hunt », the « Daughters of Leucippus », « Esau and Jacob », the « Conversion of St Paul », « Decius dedicated to the infernal Gods », and the « History of Marie de Medici » ; the other is the bay horse with a white blaze on his forehead and white forefeet which occurs in the « Lion-hunt », the « Daughters of Leucippus » and elsewhere. Vandyck painted them several times in his own pictures, admirably, among other instances, in the « St Martin » of Saventhem and Windsor Castle. He also painted the horses which appear in

(1) *Bulletin-Rubens*, II, p. 165.



THE LION-HUNT  
(Frankfurt, Munich)

work light and without retouching, and decoratively treated horses made use of his personal assistance. He painted the principal figures himself. The man who has stretched on the ground, pained in hand, with the upper part of his body in our view, is a real separate group in painting, entirely by the master's hand, and one of the best he ever did. The falling fireman is also his.

This is not the first time we find horses playing a great part in Rembrandt's work. We have

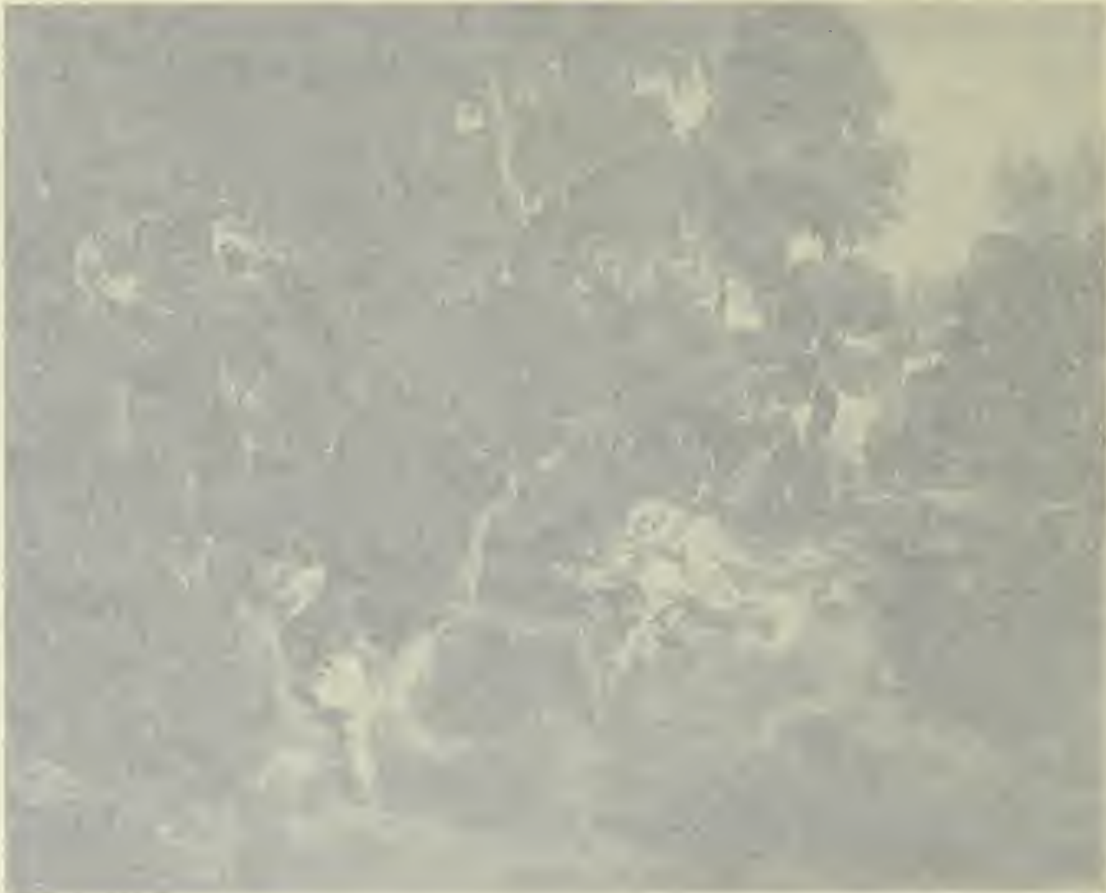


Fig. 100. Rembrandt's 'The Lion-Hunt' (Munich, Pinakothek).

from a letter from his nephew Philip de Witte (1601) that he was a great lover of horsemanship. As long as his age permitted him, he says, he took pleasure in riding a Spanish colt. (1) We know two of his horses, one is the dapple grey with a long tail and a white mane which we meet in the 'Lion-hunt', the 'Daughters of Leucippus', 'Esau and Jacob', the 'Conversion of St Paul', 'Dezans dedicated to the infant Jesus', and the 'History of Marie de Medici'; the other is the bay horse with a white blaze on his forehead and white forefeet which occurs in the 'Lion-hunt', the 'Daughters of Leucippus' and elsewhere. Vandyck painted them several times in his own pictures, admirably, among other instances, in the 'St Martin' of Saventem and Windsor Castle. He also painted the horses which appear in

(1) *Madame de Witt's*, p. 102.

### THE LION-HUNT (Pinakothek, Munich)





16.000: Franz Hanfstaengl



his master's pictures ; the hunting-pieces, like the « Story of Decius » and the « Calvary », betray the hand of the great pupil.

In the « Lion-hunt » engraved by Soutman, there are only six people, four of them on horseback. The lion has thrown himself upon one of the horsemen and torn him from his saddle over the withers of the horse, which has fallen. The lioness has laid a paw on the same horse, and is raising herself on her hind legs. Three horsemen are coming up on both



HUNTING THE CROCODILE AND HIPPOPOTAMUS  
After the engraving by P. Soutman (Museum, Augsburg).

sides to spear the lion and lioness. A huntsman lies lifeless on the ground, while another, who is wounded, is plunging his sword into the lion's neck.

In the « Lion-hunt » in the Munich Museum, engraved by Suyderhoef, there are two lions, a lioness carrying one of her cubs in her mouth and a tiger stretched dead on the ground. One of the lions has attacked a huntsman : he has fastened on to the horse with one of his hind paws and fixed one of his fore-claws in the arm of the hunter who occupies the centre of the composition, while with the other he is seizing his head. He is crushing his shoulder between his jaws. The horse rears and tries to unseat his rider, who has already been knocked down by the lion. For this horseman Rubens painted a study which is now in the Schoenborn Gallery at Vienna, and conveys admirably the expression of the most intense anguish ever borne by a human face. On the left, a lion has brought a man to the earth. On the same side are two horsemen, a negro in a turban and a European in a Hungarian cap ; one of them is



striking the second lion with his lance. On the right lies the dead tiger, and on the same side are two more cavaliers wearing helmets, who are attacking the second lion with sword and spear.

Of the three « Lion-hunts » we know, the one in the Munich Pinakothek is incontestably the best. The composition is as closely knit and the unity as complete as possible. The grey horse rearing, with his rider thrown backwards, describes an oblique line which crosses the middle of the picture ; the three cavaliers come up, each from his own side, towards this central point, where the danger is most imminent ; they are pointing their swords and lances at the lion's neck. Men and horses press close upon the wild beasts, with which they form a compact group. All are pawing the ground or bounding, in terror or rage ; they bite, claw, strike, and drag with mad fury ; but the tangled mass of these men and beasts has a sculptural beauty and is full of harmony in its rage. Any appearance there might be of too much calculation is corrected by the group stretched on the ground, which breaks the line and prolongs the movement. The scene engraved by Soutman is relatively broader in composition ; the centre is occupied by the beasts and the fallen rider, and the huntsmen come at the side. The horses of two of them have sprung aside, and the riders are obliged to turn round to face the animals. The Dresden hunting-piece is closer in composition, but there is less unity and the movements are less natural. One of the horsemen is striking sideways, while his horse rears, and two other riders are equally obliged to turn round to reach the lion.

The « Wolf-hunt » and the « Lion-hunt » are not the only hunting-pieces Rubens painted ; we know also the « Boar-hunt », the « Hippopotamus and Crocodile » and the « Hunting of Meleager and Atalanta ». There are two copies of the « Boar hunt » : one is in the Museum at Marseilles (*Œuvre*. N<sup>o</sup> 1159), the other in the Museum at Dresden (*Œuvre*. N<sup>o</sup> 1160). In the Marseilles copy the horses play a less prominent part, but the hounds enter on the scene side by side with the hunters and the animal they are pursuing. While the men stand motionless thrusting the boar-spear into the jaws of the quarry, the dogs run, bound, bite, and worry the boar with a fury and ardour which contrast with the uneasiness of the horses and their impatience to escape from danger. It is the same in the Dresden copy, in which a scene of the same kind, treated more broadly, is transferred to a woody landscape. Both pictures were engraved by Soutman ; in the second, he left out the landscape and the two huntsmen on the right. The Glasgow Museum also has a copy of this hunting-piece, which came from the Hope collection and is a faithful reproduction of that at Dresden.

The « Hippopotamus and Crocodile hunt » (*Œuvre*. N<sup>o</sup> 1161) belongs to the Augsburg Museum, and was also engraved by Soutman. Here the hunters play a thoroughly active part, and are striking the monsters, cut and thrust, while hounds and horses valiantly share their masters' danger. The movement of the composition, in which men and beasts are inextricably mingled, is terrible, but its unity is superb and its balance admirable ; it far surpasses the picture of the boar-hunt.

In connection with these hunting-pieces we must mention the « Meleager and Atalanta », another version of the « Boar-hunt ». The boar of Calydon has been wounded by one of Atalanta's arrows, but is still on his legs ; one foot rests on the body of a hunter whom he has just killed, and he awaits his assailants. Meleager is about to pierce him with his spear, two

horsemen and several men on foot are attacking him at the same time, while the hounds bay in fury. On both sides the trees of the forest raise their verdant tops above the fray. The picture is the work of a pupil, retouched by Rubens. It belongs to the Imperial Museum at Vienna (*Œuvre*. No 637). Another copy, very much the same, but differing in a few details belonged at the beginning of the last century to the Earl of Milltown, and was engraved in Rubens's life-time by P. van Kessel (*Œuvre*. No 638). A third example shows the boar sinking forward, pursued by the hounds; he is being attacked by Meleager, Atalanta, and three huntsmen. In the background is a wooded spot. In 1781 the picture was in the Houghton collection (*Œuvre*. No 639).

In all his hunting-pieces Rubens was helped by his pupils and collaborators; all of them date between 1616 and 1621. They are connected with some of his earlier works. Thus, in the *Defeat of Sennacherib* we find the rearing horse and the rider thrown from his saddle, and the horse bolting and throwing his hind legs very high which occurs in the Dresden *« Lion-hunt »*. In the *Conversion of St Paul*, we find a horse and rider closely related to those in the Munich *« Lion-hunt »*. In the *Decius wounded to death*, the Roman consul is falling from his horse, thrown backwards while one of the enemy is spearing him in the neck.

Throughout the period to which all these scenes of the chase of wild beasts belong, Rubens painted not a single *« Stag-hunt »*. It was not till later that he felt himself attracted by that subject, and then he treated it several times, putting in Diana and her nymphs as huntresses. The Berlin Museum possesses the most important of these pictures (*Œuvre*. No 590), and another occurs in Lord Ashburton's Gallery in London (*Œuvre*. No 588). The sketch belongs to the duke d'Osuna. The second of the pictures was painted for Philip IV, and dates from Rubens's last years. Snijders painted the animals and Wildens the landscape. A third *« Stag-hunt »* which belonged to Sir Robert Walpole, is known to us from the engraving by Jos. Goupy (*Œuvre*. No 589). A fourth was engraved by Francis Lamb, to whom it belonged (*Œuvre*. No 591).

A picture of *« Bull-hunting »* is known to us from a drawing in the Museum at Berlin (*Œuvre*. No 1496) and by an imitation or copy in the Corsini Museum at Rome.

Rubens treated his hunting-pieces in a lighter and more superficial manner than his other creations, than his altar-pieces especially. To him they were decorative paintings, which he had in great part carried out by others, while he confined himself to retouching them. But the design is entirely his, like the sketch for the *« Boar-hunt »* in Dresden and that for the Munich *« Lion-hunt »*, which is in the Hermitage at St Petersburg; and the drawing and composition were chiefly of importance in his eyes. In these groups thrown pell-mell together, he wanted to show the most intense display of strength, the most violent passions, the most extreme and imminent peril. He, the most dramatic of painters, was naturally called to create the most dramatic of works of art, of a kind which no one dared to attempt after him, just as no one had risked it before him. All epochs and all schools have furnished painters who represented animals, but no one has succeeded like Rubens in expressing the life and the combats of wild beasts; and though it was only during a very brief period of his career that he painted these wild children of nature, he did not fail on that account to assure himself the first rank among animal painters.

The hunting-pieces were original creations and the expression of personal sentiment; but

the first idea of them had no doubt been suggested to Rubens by the recollection of some of the productions of ancient sculpture which he had seen in Rome. The marble tombs of the distinguished Romans of the Empire were usually adorned with bas-reliefs. One of the favourite subjects represented on them was the chase of the boar of Calydon. The Museum of the Capitol alone has three, and there is a striking resemblance between one of them, in which Meleager appears, lance in rest, attacking the monster, while Atalanta draws an arrow from her quiver, and the manner in which Rubens treats the same subject in his picture in the Imperial Museum at Vienna. But if Rubens was inspired in the choice of his subject by the recollections of these antiques, and if he owes them also his group of Meleager and Atalanta, the manner in which he treated hunting-pieces was strictly his own. In the ancient sculptures there is nothing to suggest the furious strife, the impetuous movement, and the dramatic power, which characterize the works of Rubens.

Besides his hunting-pieces Rubens painted other animals also about this time. Thus, we know his lions in « Daniel in the lions' den », and those in the history of Marie de Medici. In his « Neptune and Amphitrite » again he made use of the hippotamus and the crocodile which he had introduced into a hunting-piece; he puts the crocodile alone into his « Four parts of the World ». He always painted this animal in the same way, with jaws open and head turned round. We find several lions also in the same position, notably those in the « Daniel » and the « Neptune and Amphitrite ». He had in his possession, therefore, a certain number of sketches made by himself, or of reproductions painted by others, which he used as occasion arose. We know that at this period he was working seriously at zoological studies : in March, 1613, he bought Aldrovandus's work upon that science, which had just appeared; in October he procured the part devoted to fish, which was newly published, and in 1617 the part on solipedes (pachyderms), published in the preceding year. In 1613 he bought the part of Gesner's *Historiæ Animalium* which treats of serpents, and the two last parts of Theodor de Bry's description of the Indies (1). All these works contain figures of animals, but we cannot see that he could possibly have used them in painting his quadrupeds; nor do we find it any more possible that he could have imitated the pictures of his predecessors. Certainly, we meet with hippopotamuses and crocodiles in Gesner's works, but like those that occur elsewhere they are drawn in so superficial a way that they give but a very imperfect idea of the reality and could not have been used by the painter as models. There is only one animal which we know him to have painted after an existing engraving; that is the head of the rhinoceros in the « Neptune and Amphitrite », which he borrowed from Albert Durer's wood-cut representing the entire animal, a copy of which was made by Hans Lieftrinck.

Rubens had evidently seen and painted from life the animals which appear in his hunting-pieces and his other pictures. They are exact to the smallest details, full of life and natural in movement. He lacked no opportunity of seeing lions : the great nobles of that period often kept them as curiosities. Thus Beyerlinck relates that he himself saw at Heidelberg, in the palace of the Count Palatine Otto Heinrich, a superb lion, which was so attached to the prince's jester that he would lick and caress him; he adds that the Emperor Maximilian and Don John of

(1) MAX ROOSFS : *Rubens en Balthasar Moretus*, Antwerp. 1884, pp. 110-114; or *Bulletin-Rubens*, II, pp. 187-191.



Austria had tame lions which followed them like dogs (1). Rubens probably found the opportunity of studying these animals in Italy, at the court of some prince who owned a menagerie. There was a collection of this kind at Florence in the ancient ducal stables, near the church of St Mark; it included lions, tigers, bears, and Numidian bulls (2). Golnitzius states that in this country lions and other wild beasts were maintained at Ghent in the Prinsenhof (3). The Archdukes Albert and Isabella had a menagerie of the same kind. In a letter of the 5<sup>th</sup> September,



DECIUS MORTALLY WOUNDED — Sketch.

1621, Jan Breughel expressly states that the birds and other animals he placed in the garland surrounding the Madonna which Rubens painted for Cardinal Borromeo (*Œuvre*, No 199) were executed after those belonging to the Infanta. We do not know if he took his quadrupeds from there too.

### THE STORY OF DECIUS MUS.

Another important work mentioned in the correspondence between Rubens and Carleton is the "Story of the Roman Consul, Decius Mus". As we said above, it had been agreed

(1) LAUR, BEYERLINCK : *Magnum Theatrum Vitæ Humanæ*. Article *Leo*.

(2) Propre *Ædem* D. Marci Equile est Ducis, vulgo *l'Écurie*, in quo aluntur hodie leones, tigrides, leopardi, ursi, boves Numidici. *Geographia Blaviana*, Vol, octavum : *Italia*, 1662, p. 149.

(3) Subtus juxta ædes Palatinas leones ostenduntur; seniori nomen *Austriæ*, junioribus binis *Burgundiæ et Flandriæ* erat. Enutriti solent hic plures exoticæ et feroces belluæ, ut obtinet mos apud Florentinos. ABRAH. GOLNITZIUS : *Ulysses Belgico-Gallicus*. Lugd. Batav. Elzevir, 1631, p. 20.

between the painter and the English ambassador that Rubens should deliver 4000 florins' worth of pictures and 2000 florins' worth of tapestry in exchange for the antique marbles belonging to the diplomatist. The choice of the tapestries was left to Carleton. In consequence, Rubens wrote to him on the 12<sup>th</sup> May, 1618 : — In the tapestries I could be of great assistance to your » mercantile friend by the great experience I have had with these Brussels tapestries, from the » many commissions which come to me from Italy and other parts for similar works ; and » besides I have made some cartoons very sumptuous, at the request of some Genoese gentlemen, which are now being worked, and to say the truth, if one wishes to have » exquisite things, they must be made on purpose ; of this I will willingly take care that you shall be well served. Some days afterwards, a new arrangement was made. Rubens was not to send the tapestry, but to put the 2000 florins at the disposal of the man charged by Carleton to choose and purchase them. Rubens, therefore, concerned himself no more with the matter ; but he wrote again on the 26<sup>th</sup> May, 1618 : — In respect to the tapestries, I can say little, because, » to confess the truth, at present there are no very fine things, and as I wrote, they are rarely » to be found without having them wrought on purpose ; yet the History of Camillus not pleasing you, I do not think that man of yours had any disinclination towards the one of » Scipio and Hannibal, which might perhaps better please Y. E. (and to speak frankly, in all » these things the selection is arbitrary) without dispute of great excellency ; I will send Y. E. » the whole measurements of my cartoons of the History of Decius Mus, the Roman Consul » who devoted himself for the success of the Roman people ; but I shall write to Brussels to » have them correct, having given everything to the master of the Works ».

Thus, on the 26<sup>th</sup> May, 1618, Rubens had painted the cartoons for the tapestries of the » Story of Decius Mus », and at that date they were in Brussels being used as models by the tapestry-maker. The cartoons had been ordered of him by » some Genoese gentlemen ». He does not give their names, but we may suppose that they were the Pallavicini. Andrea Picheneotti had stood god-father to Rubens's second son as proxy for one of them, Nicolo Pallavicini, on the 23<sup>rd</sup> May, 1618, at the moment when the painter was putting, or had put the finishing touches to the cartoons which were to serve as models for the tapestries. The cartoons now belong to the celebrated Liechtenstein Gallery at Vienna. It cannot be said for certain when or how they came there. We only know that they were there already in 1759, when the earliest engraving was made after one of them.

The series of the » Story of Decius Mus » consists of eight cartoons, six of which belong to the history, properly so called, while the two others are rather decorative pieces (*Œuvre*. Nos 707-714). The story of Decius Mus, who sacrificed himself for his country, is well known. In the year 430 B. C. Publius Decius Mus was Consul in conjunction with Titus Manlius Torquatus. They marched at the head of four legions against the Latins, and encountered them in Campania near Vesuvius. Livy (VIII, 6-9) relates that, at the moment when the decisive battle was about to be joined, the two Roman consuls had the same dream ; they saw a man of extraordinary stature, who told them that a general must be sacrificed on one side and an army on the other to the divinities of the realm of the shades, and of the earth, the common mother. They agreed that he whose wing should give way should devote himself, in order to assure the defeat of the opposing army. When the battle was joined, Decius's troops fell back. Then

he called the pontifex maximus and asked him what were the words that must be pronounced when a man devoted himself to death for the safety of the Roman people. Marcus Valerius told him; then the consul sent his lictors to inform his colleague that he was about to sacrifice himself to his country. He threw himself into the midst of the enemy's forces, and with him fear and panic passed into the ranks of the Latins. They were beaten at the moment when Decius fell mortally wounded. Not till the morrow was his body found; it was there buried with the honours it deserved.

The story, therefore, is a sombre and sublime drama, a heroic act of faith and sacrifice accomplished by one of the noblest representatives of the Roman people. To celebrate it, the artist takes an epic tone, and among all his works there is none in which this tone is better sustained, none in which the action is represented under nobler forms.

The first cartoon shows Decius speaking to his officers and telling them his dream. Standing on a square pedestal and wearing his armour, he is resting one hand on his general's staff and raising the other with a commanding gesture; his head is bare and his cloak floats above his armour. Before him stand five warriors, variously equipped; each of them carries a standard or a banner. They listen attentively to their general, and their faces betray the interest they are taking in his fate.

The second cartoon represents Decius asking the augurs what remains for him to do. On the right we see the consul with two men of his train. In the centre the pontifex maximus is pointing to the liver of a victim, which another priest is holding on a plate; on the left is an altar, and two sacrificial attendants who are leading up a bull to be slain; two temple servants, a flute-player and three officers with standards; above are birds, the interpreters of fate. On the ground is stretched the sacrificed bull, whose liver has been questioned by the augurs. Decius is listening in mournful depression to the answer, which is his death-warrant. His faithful lictor, as sad as himself, is looking at an invisible point.

In the third cartoon we see Decius vowed to the Gods. He bows his head, which is covered with his purple cloak, under the hand of Marcus Valerius, who, standing before him pronounces the formula which the consul whom the lot has chosen must repeat: « Janus, Jupiter, father Mars, Quirinus, Bellona, ye Lares, ye gods Novensiles, ye gods Indigetes, ye divinities, under whose power we and our enemies are, and ye dii Manes, I pray you, I adore you, I ask you favour, that you would prosperously grant strength and victory to the Roman people, the Quirites; and that ye may affect the enemies of the Roman people, the Quirites, with terror, dismay, and death. In such manner as I have expressed in words, so do I devote the legions and auxiliaries of the enemy, together with myself, to the dii Manes and to Earth for the republic of the Quirites, for the army, legions, auxiliaries of the Roman people, the Quirites ».

Rubens, as we see, has departed from the story told by Livy; not both consuls, but Decius alone, has dreamed the prophetic dream; he alone consults the priests; it is before the battle and not after, that chance has declared against him, and he has vowed himself to the gods. In this manner, the drama has only one hero, Decius, and begins with the dream; it acquires a unity which is wanting in Livy, and can be easily divided into several acts.

The fourth cartoon shows Decius at the moment when he is dismissing his lictors and



mounting his horse for the fatal ride. The next cartoon shows the battle in which he fell. His horse is rearing, he is unseated and falls backward, mortally wounded by a spear-blow in the neck. In this composition we may note the resemblance of more than one figure to those in other pictures : the horse rearing and throwing his rider occurs again in the « Defeat of Sennacherib », the man dealing the spear-blow and the horse running away appear in the Dresden « Lion-hunt » ; the dead warrior stretched in the foreground comes in the « Hero crowned by Victory », in the Museum at Cassel.

The last of the six large cartoons represents the funeral obsequies of Decius. The body is stretched on a state-litter. In the background a rich trophy of arms has been erected, in which we see the heads of the enemy stuck on pikes ; musicians are blowing trumpets. In the foreground the slaves are bringing the treasures won by conquest in precious vessels ; prisoners of war are sitting or kneeling in chains ; women and children destined to be burned as victims on the general's funeral pile are being dragged forward by force. In the trees which stretch their branches over the scene are men at work cutting the wood that is to be used for the pyre, and others are bringing it up. Standing by the side of the corpse is Manlius Torquatus, bewailing the death of his colleague with gestures of grief, and praising his heroic action. The series is completed by two compositions of less interest : a « Rome triumphant » and a « Trophy of arms ».

Rubens must have felt himself strongly attracted by the « Story of Decius Mus », and he treated it *con amore* and with success as well. We know that nothing in the world inspired him with so much respect as ancient Rome. In his Decius, his enthusiasm for the heroic city found its warmest and most complete expression. Such a man and such a story were made to delight him. In Rubens's eyes, the religion of the ancient world was one of its most attractive characteristics. I believe that the complicated history of the gods and demi-gods of paganism was more familiar to him than the Gospel or the Legends of the Saints ; his conception of art, too, was more pagan than Christian. The religion of ancient Rome plays a great part in the story of Decius, and in his cycle Rubens has certainly not decreased it. On the contrary, he interpolated into the story the episode of the pontifex maximus, in order to paint a scene of the religious life of ancient Rome, and gave the act of self-devotion to the gods a solemnity which is certainly not indicated in the story of the Roman historian. In the « Story of Constantine » he was to return to Roman episodes, and to produce in that new series a couple of powerful works ; but the rest of the series was to be far inferior to his Decius, just as for him the history of the fortunate emperor was far beneath the sombre drama of the republican consul.

As the result of his studies he knew best the Rome of the last years of the Republic and the beginning of the Empire, Rome powerful and civilized, as he had seen her represented on the bas-reliefs of the great century and Trajan's column, as she is described by famous historians and sung by great poets ; and yet it was not from the period of flourishing prosperity that he borrowed his two principal Roman subjects. One, that of Decius, he took from the annals of an epoch still semi-barbarous ; the other, the Constantine, from those of an epoch of already marked decadence. Rubens was far less well-informed on Rome of the barbarous age, and therefore he gave it the forms of later centuries, which he knew better. His



THE OBSCURES OF DECIVS  
after the engraving by Adam Bartsch (Lichtenstein Gallery, Vienna)









Decius is a general of the imperial epoch ; his soldiers and priests are of the same date ; their equipment, and all the other accessories of the drama have the monumental forms of the classic age ; but in effect as in spirit, the story of the consul and his companions in arms personifies the heroic years of the Republic ; their actions are extremely simple and genuinely epic ; their attitudes and gestures are full of nobility, with an air which, though a trifle theatrical, is not declamatory, and seems to be the very nature of this superior order of men. The interior life, the soul of drama, is not wanting. The profound emotion of the hero before the sacrificing priest who is reading fate in the entrails of the victim, the majesty of the priest pronouncing the fatal formula in a religious ecstasy, the touching gesture of Decius as he dismisses his lictors, the sorrowful attitude of Manlius Torquatus beside the corpse of his colleague, and the dumb misery or noisy lamentation of the captives in the same picture, express this interior life in the most striking manner.

As a conception, the « Decius » is not the work of an archaeologist, but that of a poet, who uses what he knows to translate what he feels. It is a picture of the moral grandeur and the external beauty of Rome, created by an artist profoundly penetrated by the sublimity of his subject, and one who, borne on by his inspiration, rises easily to the heights of his mighty task. His dramatic power has allowed him to combine everything to the common end of a striking effect, and his extraordinary gift of narration has led him to conduct and coordinate the drama he has put into pictures, in such a way that it unfolds before our eyes as if we were reading it in a book. The Decius was the first of his works of great extent ; the « Ceilings of the Jesuits' church », the « History of Marie de Medici » and of « Henry IV », the « Constantine » and the « Achilles », the « Figures of the Holy Sacrament », the « Ceilings at Whitehall », the « Entry of the Cardinal-Infant », and the « Ovid's Metamorphoses » for the Torre de la Parada, came after this first work. They were to reveal the height of his intellect, what it dared to undertake and what it was able to realise ; but they did not surpass this first creation and could not even equal it.

The execution of this master-piece did not fall below the conception. The « Story of Decius » shows a series of superb figures, painted in bright, warm colours, engaged in dramatic action and overflowing with human truth. The figures in the foreground were painted by Rubens, the distances, which are dryer in tone, and the secondary characters were carried out by his pupils and more especially by Vandyck, who helped his master here as he did in the great works of this epoch, the « Miracles of St François Xavier », the « Calvary », the « Hunting-pieces », and others as well. Here, as in all the works in which the great pupil



A HORSE, SADDLED - Drawing (Albertina).



collaborated, the painting shows an astonishing unity, which scarcely permits the distinction between the two hands to be seen, and a firmness, a fullness of tone, a warmth, and a strength which are revealed, among other things, in the brownish tint of the flesh. As we have said already, the horses in particular must have been painted by Vandyck; it is more than probable that Jan Wildens did the landscapes.

It is a singular fact that we find two documents in which Vandyck's part in the Decius is very much exaggerated. Both date from the seventeenth century, and they come from very different sources. The first is furnished by Bellori, the Italian author of the lives of painters, who says in his article on Vandyck. « Rubens drew no less an advantage from Vandyck's talent as a colourist, for the master, not being in a position to accomplish the numerous works that were ordered of him, employed him to copy his compositions, and taught him to transfer them to the canvas and turn his drawings and sketches into colour, which was of great service to him. Vandyck did the cartoons and the pictures painted for the tapestries of the « Story of Decius Mus », as well as other cartoons which, thanks to his great talents, he carried out with ease ». According to Bellori therefore, who is usually well-informed, and whose book was published in 1672, Vandyck did all the work; but there is probably some negligence of expression here; what goes before and what follows make it clear that Bellori meant that Vandyck executed, after Rubens's sketches, the cartoons and the pictures which are one and the same thing. In his *Geschiedenis der Antwerpsche Schilderschool* (p. 702) M. Van den Branden says that Vandyck executed six magnificent pictures after models made by Rubens for the tapestries representing the « Death of Decius Mus ». The author bases his statement on three documents he discovered in the archives of Antwerp, and which I give in my *Œuvre de Rubens* (1). In a note alluding to these documents he adds: « In my opinion, these six compositions are those that form the celebrated *Geschichte vom Tode des consuls Decius Mus* in the Liechtenstein gallery at Vienna, where they appear wrongly under the name of Peter Paul Rubens ».

Let us study the contents of the documents in question. On the 16<sup>th</sup> February, 1661, the Antwerp painter Gonzales Coques stated before a notary that conjointly with Jan-Carlo de Witt and Jan-Baptist van Eyck he had bought « five pictures being the story of the Emperor Decius, painted by Anthonio van Dijck, and that for the sum of 400 pounds Flemish (2400 florins) ». On the 24<sup>th</sup> May, 1664, Jan-Carlo de Witt withdraws from the partnership and Gonzales Coques remains sole proprietor with Jan-Baptist van Eyck. On the 15<sup>th</sup> August, 1682, Gonzales Coques being on his deathbed, both state that they own in common « certain pictures of Decius, painted by van Dijck after sketches by Rubens ». When Jan-Baptist van Eyck died on the 6<sup>th</sup> July, 1692, the « six pictures composed by Rubens and painted by van Dijck » still adorned his dining-room. In this first document it will be noticed that we are concerned with five pictures, and that a sixth comes to be added later. According to the inventory of the goods of Jan-Baptist van Eyck, these six pictures were the « Triumph of the said Emperor Decius », a « Sacrifice », the « Roman people », the « Trophy », the « Emperor Decius pierced with a spear », and the « Funeral Obsequies of the Emperor ». Between the declaration of the 16<sup>th</sup> February, 1661, that of the 15<sup>th</sup> August, 1682, and the inventory of the 6<sup>th</sup> July, 1692, there

(1) *Œuvre de Rubens*, III, pp. 204-206.

creeps in a change in the manner in which the work is attributed to Vandyck; to begin with the pictures were painted by him, then they were painted by him after sketches by Rubens, and finally they were composed by the master and merely painted by the pupil.

Fortunately against these pieces of evidence we can set two others, which are a little more conclusive. We have seen that Rubens himself stated on several occasions that the cartoons were his work, and, what is more, we possess the works in dispute. At first sight, as also after mature examination, no doubt is possible: they are by Rubens, by the same right as many others; he painted the sketches, transferred them, or had them transferred, to the large canvas, had the pictures prepared by his pupils, and then finished them himself, repainting the principal figures completely and retouching the others. There is absolutely nothing to authorize the attribution to Vandyck of anything more than the transference on to the canvas of the master's creation. How could it be otherwise? On the 26<sup>th</sup> May, 1618, the eight cartoons were finished and sent to the weaver; at the latest, then, they must have been painted at the beginning of 1618, and very probably they had been worked at during part of the year 1617. Vandyck, who was then 18 years old, knew little of history or of Roman customs; he never treated a subject that touched on them; his original pictures of this date have a roughness of drawing and painting that borders upon brutality. The « Story of Decius Mus » is the work of a firm hand and of a genius that has reached its maturity; the principal figures, for example, the priest who is dedicating Decius to the gods, Decius mounting his horse, the prisoners of war, the corpse in the scene of the funeral obsequies, and others besides, are master-pieces of painting, that no one could attribute to an inexperienced pupil. Not only is the « Story of Decius » the work of Rubens, but we do not hesitate to say that it is the most Rubenian of all his works. Vandyck collaborated in the large pictures; the fusion of the master's painting with the pupil's, characteristic of the brushwork of both, is sufficient proof of that; the horses, among which Rubens's dapple-grey occurs three times, must also be his work; other pupils no doubt lent their collaboration, but the master repainted everything and put his imprint upon all.

One more word on the history of the cartoons. We find, then, in 1692, six cartoons of Decius collected in the dining-room of Jan-Baptist van Eyck, who lived in the Lange Gasthuisstraat, at Antwerp. So far as we can trust to the brief indications of the inventory, these were « Decius consulting the augurs », his « Death », his « Funeral obsequies », the « Rome triumphant », and the « Trophy of Arms ». As to the title, the « Roman people », we can not tell to which cartoon it refers. The cartoons of « Decius relating his dream », « Decius dismissing his lictors » and « Decius vowed to the gods », or at any rate two of them, are not mentioned in the inventory, and as never more than six cartoons are mentioned in the agreements made between J. B. van Eyck and his fellow-owners, it is probable that the copy mentioned in the documents in question is not the same as the series of eight cartoons in the Liechtenstein gallery, but another, in which Vandyck perhaps had a greater part. The cartoons that are now in the possession of the princes Liechtenstein were in the palace of Cleves at Brussels whence Prince Charles-Adam bought them for 72,000 Dutch florins (1). Besides the original series there

(1) A. WAUTERS : *Les Tapisseries Bruxelloises*, p. 302. DE BURIN : *Traité des Connaissances nécessaires aux amateurs de tableaux*, II, 66.

existed a second, probably composed of copies made for the weavers, which remained in their workshops. In 1773 four of these cartoons were put up for sale in London ; in 1779 four large cartoons taken from the « Story of Decius » and intended to be worked in tapestry appeared again in the Bertels sale. They were knocked down at 1500 florins ; and these were probably the same as those offered for sale in London six years before.

The sketches for these cartoons were known at one time. That for « Decius relating his dreams » was knocked down to Lebrun at the Randon de Boisset sale in Paris in 1773 ; that for « Decius consulting the augurs » was sold in Amsterdam in 1775 and knocked down in London in 1833 to Mr Lane Davies ; that for « Decius vowed to the gods » once formed part of Richard Cosway's collection ; that for « Decius wounded to death » was lately still in the Pastrana collection at Madrid ; that for the « Funeral Obsequies of Decius » belongs to the Pinakothek at Munich ; a sixth sketch, that for the « Rome triumphant », was sold at the Colonna sale in Paris in 1795. Of all these sketches the only one we can study is that in the Pinakothek at Munich ; it is painted by Rubens's own hand, and has been used as a model for the large picture.

More than one series of tapestries was woven from these cartoons. An example in eight pieces, executed by Jacques Geubels of Brussels, is in the Royal Museum at Madrid. The Schwarzenberg family at Vienna has a series of ten pieces ; four decorative subjects have probably been added to the six others which make up the story, properly so called ; the Liechtenstein family possesses four tapestries woven by Jan Raes of Brussels ; the church of St Stephen at Vienna has two ; the Emperor of Austria, four ; the Duke of Wallenstein, at Prague, two ; Prince Albert of Solms-Braunfels had one, and twenty years ago another was offered for sale at Vienna.

THE HERO CROWNED BY VICTORY. — A picture which was painted at the same period as the « Story of Decius », and which presents a striking resemblance to one of the pictures in that series, in the « Hero crowned by Victory » in the Cassel Museum (*Œuvre*, No 830). A warrior, with bare head and bare legs, wearing a red cloak over his cuirass, is seated on the bodies of Hate and Discord. In his right hand he holds his sword still wet with blood, and his left is placed on his shield, which rests on the back of a prisoner of war lying on the ground. A Victory with fair hair, the upper part of her body nude, and the lower enveloped in a purple drapery, is crowning him with one hand and with the other holding a palm above his head. A winged Genius, holding a sheaf of javelins in his hand, is standing on an ancient altar, on which are placed a red banner, some arms and a cuirass. The Victory bears a striking resemblance to the woman who is crowning the hero in the picture in the Dresden Museum. (*Œuvre*, No 828). The same resemblance exists between the principal figures in the two pictures ; the corpse on which the warrior is sitting is almost the same as that in the « Death of Decius » and the chained warrior has a great likeness to that in the « Funeral Obsequies of Decius ». Rubens, therefore, resumed, with modifications, a subject which he had treated before and used for it figures borrowed from one of his recent works. But this picture far surpasses the « Hero crowned » of the Dresden Museum. The warrior is a striking figure. He is transported by his victory, his look plunges into the infinite, he is dreaming of conquered renown and his



plans for the future; he exults in his glory, and is ready to draw his sword again, if need be; and therefore his eye falls without pity on the corpses of the vanquished as on a vile thing. The picture is entirely the master's work; blueish modelling rules in the Victory and the corpse, and the cuirass and the angel's wings also have a blue tint. On the outlines the shadows are dark brown with gold reflections. The brown back of the prisoner contrasts strongly with the paleness of the corpse. The painting is firm as a whole, with sharp outlines



A HERO CROWNED BY VICTORY (Museum, Cassel).

against a dark background; the blueish tints and the intense, but restrained light, give it extraordinary power. It is far more vigorous than in the works of 1613 to 1615. Rubens has gained in richness of colouring and brilliant tonality. This brilliance, which is not without a touch of sharpness and coldness, is characteristic of the years 1618 and 1619.

The « Hero crowned » was painted for the Old Guild of the Bow at Antwerp, in the hall of which the picture was hung over the fire-place. In 1749 it was bought by Gerard Hoet, a painter and picture-dealer of Antwerp, who had gone to settle in Amsterdam. He paid only 5000 florins for this master-piece and another no less interesting picture, the « Jubilee of the deans of the bow » by Teniers, which is now in the Hermitage at St Petersburg; but in exchange for the « Hero crowned » he was bound to give a copy of it, which he had made by Aart Schouman at The Hague. Since that year, 1749, the picture has belonged to the gallery at Cassel. The commissioners of Napoleon I took it to Paris, and tradition says that the emperor had it placed over his study table.

There is a reduced replica (*Œuvre*. N<sup>o</sup> 831) in the Imperial Museum at Vienna, in which

the altar is replaced by a column, and the Genius holding the javelins by a Bellona wearing a helmet and carrying a thunderbolt. The attitude of the hero is slightly changed. This little picture, which is very pleasant and rich in colour, belonged to the Archduke Leopold-William, governor-general, and was included in the inventory of the imperial collection as early as 1659. It is possibly the same as the one mentioned in the « Specification » of Rubens's goods under the title of « A Christian Hero crowned by Victory, on panel ».

A third interpretation of the same subject, once in the collection of the duke de Richelieu, is now in the Museum at Tours (*Œuvre*. N° 832). The hero is crowned by Victory, and by his side is a little Genius plucking palms. On the right a heap of arms ; in the background a plain, with a castle in flames. It is a pupil's work, rapidly retouched by the master, and painted a few years after the Cassel picture. In the inventory of Jan-Carlo de Witte (Antwerp, 1688) this picture is called « A piece of painting representing Mars crowned by Fame, of which the figures were painted by Rubens and the arms by [Paul] de Vos » (1). The Pinakothek at Munich has a copy.

ABRAHAM AND MELCHIZEDEK. — Another picture, « Abraham and Melchizedek », in the Museum at Caen (*Œuvre*. N° 100) presents no less striking a likeness to the « Story of Decius ». The patriarch, in Roman garb, the venerable grey-haired high priest, the men bringing the jugs of wine and the basket of loaves, and the page holding Abraham's horse are all figures we meet again in one or other of the pictures in the « Story of Decius ». For the rest, the work was painted by a pupil, possibly Vandyck, and merely retouched by Rubens. In 1749 it belonged to the Museum at Cassel and was bought by Gerard Hoet from the du Bois family. In 1806 it was taken to Paris by Denon and presented by Napoleon to the Caen Museum in 1811.

PICTURES SENT TO DUDLEY CARLETON. — Among the works which Rubens offered to sell to Dudley Carleton there were some which he had painted several years before, like the « Prometheus chained on Caucasus » (*Œuvre*. N° 671), which is mentioned by Baudius before 1613, and the « St Sebastian » (*Œuvre*. N° 492), of which we have spoken already (p. 141), and which was certainly executed before that year and probably in 1610. Others were copies of earlier pictures, among the rest the « Last Judgment », painted after the picture in the possession of Wolfgang-Wilhelm of Neuburg. Dudley Carleton would not take it, and when Golnitzius visited Rubens's studio he found it still there. The case is the same with the « Christ and the Twelve Apostles » (*Œuvre*. Nos 68-80), copies of pictures he had painted in Spain for the duke of Lerma, and of « Hagar driven out by Abraham », after a picture painted about 1612, of which we have spoken above (p. 136).

Others had just been painted or were finished off for Dudley Carleton. Thus on the 20<sup>th</sup> May, 1618, Rubens writes that not only the « Prometheus » and the « St Sebastian » but also the « Daniel in the lions' den », the « Tigers with satyrs and nymphs », « Leda and the swan and a small Cupid », and « St Peter taking the tribute-money out of the fish », were finished, and that he was about to do the « Lion-hunt », the « Susannah », and the small

(1) F. DONNET: *Van Dijk inconnu*, p. 12.

picture representing « Abraham driving out Hagar ». He says no more of the « Christ on the Cross », nor of the « Achilles among the daughters of Lycomedes » ; but we know for certain that the latter of these two dates from the period of the negotiations with Dudley Carleton.

A word about these different works.

The « Daniel in the lions' den » (*Œuvre*. N° 130) belongs to the time of the hunting-pieces and the studies of lions. The Albertina has a sheet of paper on which Rubens has drawn ten of these animals ; seven of them figured in the « Daniel ». The others are represented in tranquil attitudes, lying or sitting, as Rubens had seen them in reality. In the picture the lions are the essential thing, and the Daniel only a pretext. He is nude, and awaits his destiny in an attitude of supplication and despair, though the lions do not seem to be paying any attention to him. Dudley Carleton bought the picture and presented it to Charles I. Later, it passed into the collection of the Duke of Hamilton. In 1882 it was purchased by Mr Becker Denison, after whose death it was bought back at auction by the Duke of Hamilton. Dr Th. von Frimmel claims to have discovered the sketch in the possession of Mr Leermann at Bremen.

We do not know what has become of the « Tigers with nymphs and satyrs », which was bought by Carleton. A picture representing this subject, painted about 1615, is in the Oldenbourg Museum, but it only measures 2 ft. high by 2 ft. 4 in. wide (*Œuvre*. N° 653), while Sir Dudley Carleton's was 9 ft. by 11 ft.

We are equally without knowledge of the fate of the « Leda and the swan » and the « St Peter », which were taken by the English statesman, and of the « Christ on the Cross », which he refused. It is true that the Dublin Museum has a picture of the same size and representing the same subject, « St Peter taking the tribute-money out of the fish » ; but the catalogue of the Museum speaks of the picture as being by Rubens's pupils, with a few retouches by the master ; and as the painter expressly states that the work was his own painting, it would be rash to affirm, in the face of the statement of the proprietors, that their picture is the original work.

Of the numerous pictures of « Christ on the Cross » that Rubens painted, only one agrees with the extraordinary dimensions of the picture he offered Carleton in 1618 ; that is the Christ called *au coup de poing*, which was bought in 1648 for the monastery at Tongerlo and was probably destroyed by the soldiers of the French Republic (*Œuvre*. N° 291). We know this picture from a superb drawing in the Boymans Museum at Rotterdam (*Œuvre*. N° 1345), and the masterly engraving of it made by Pontius in 1631. The name given to this picture is explained by the two angels, one driving away death and the other the devil, both of whom are raising their clenched fists to strike the evil spirits.

One of the twelve pictures is well known, the « Achilles among the daughters of Lycomedes » (*Œuvre*. N° 567). It is now in the Museum at Madrid, and was bought in 1628 by Philip IV. Achilles is standing in the centre, raising with one hand the sword he has found among the merchandise of Ulysses, and which he has chosen for his share ; in the other he holds the scabbard. On the right are a slave, and Ulysses disguised as a merchant ; on the left, four of the daughters of Lycomedes and their attendants. In the background are the buildings of a splendid palace. Rubens states in his letter to Dudley Carleton that his best pupil had worked with him on this picture ; there can be no doubt that he refers to Vandyck, and indeed the



fusion of the work of master and pupil is as complete here as usual. But it seems to us that this picture must be considered one of the earliest in which Rubens had recourse to the collaboration of his favourite pupil. The richness of the flesh is the striking feature, while in 1618 Vandyck was employing warm and firm tones; the composition is well arranged, the painting dry and



THE JUDGMENT OF SOLOMON — After the engraving by Boëte a Bolswert (Museum, Copenhagen).

a little cold. Rubens has retouched it considerably, in the drapery no less than the flesh. The figure in the foreground, that of the crouching princess, is almost identical with the shepherdess in the « Adoration » in the Rouen Museum (*Œuvre*. N<sup>o</sup> 150).

We have no certain knowledge of the « Susannah » offered by Rubens in exchange to Carleton. Rubens gives no particulars of it beyond « A Susanna, done by one of my scholars, » the whole, however, retouched by my hand ». We know two « Susannahs » of this date, one engraved in 1620 by Lucas Vorsterman, and the other about the same year by Michel Lasne, and by Paul Pontius in 1624. Judging by the engravings, the first is far the finer. The young woman, charming in her confusion, is sitting on the edge of the bath with her legs crossed, one foot in the water, her arms clasped over her breast, defending herself against the tentative efforts of one of the old men. The other has lifted the stuff that covered Susannah's back and exposed her opulent flesh. He looks with greedy eyes on the treasures he has discovered, and

laughs at his lewdness (*Œuvre*. N° 132). The picture seems to have disappeared without leaving any traces; there is a copy of it in the collection of Prince Yussopoff at St Petersburg, judging from which the picture must have been painted about 1614. The « Susannah » shows a striking resemblance to the « Shivering Venus » of the same year. The other interpretation of the subject shows Susannah sitting on a stool. The two elders are standing behind her, each holding an end of the stuff that covered the bather's shoulders, which they have raised; one of them is devouring her plump flesh with his eyes, while the other strokes it with his fingers. Here again, Susannah has crossed her arms over her breast, and is looking in trouble and confusion at the grey-beards. The Stockholm Museum has an early copy of this picture (*Œuvre*. N° 133). It is impossible to express an opinion on the merit of either of these paintings. The nude Susannah is evidently the essential thing, and the *raison d'être* of the picture. The superb female forms which he had represented clothed in the « Achilles » Rubens here wished to exhibit for our admiration in all the softness of the flesh and the brilliance of the skin.

The small picture of « Hagar driven out by Abraham and Sarah » (*Œuvre*. N° 106) is now in the collection of the Duke of Westminster in London. With the exception of a few details it is similar to the small picture of the same subject in the Hermitage Museum at St Petersburg.

Rubens himself stated that he had chosen a subject that was neither sacred nor profane, although it was taken from holy Scripture: Sarah and Abraham reproaching the pregnant Hagar, who is leaving their abode in a most graceful attitude. « It is done on panel », he added, « because little things succeed better on it than on canvass. I have engaged, as is my custom, » a very skilful man in his pursuit, to finish the landscapes, solely to augment the enjoyment » of V.E.; but as to the rest be assured I have not suffered a living soul to put hand on them ».

Among the extremely large number of works produced by Rubens between the years 1616 and 1621, we have dealt with those he painted for churches and those discussed in his correspondence with Sir Dudley Carleton. The first are among the most important of this period and of Rubens's whole career; in the second series we have discussed his hunting-pieces and his « Story of Decius », which also occupy a high place among his creations. It remains now to speak of the works of the same date which belong to neither of these two



GROUP FROM THE RECONCILIATION OF ESAU AND JACOB  
Drawing (Plantin-Moretus Museum, Antwerp).



categories. They are so numerous that to deal fully with them all would take us far beyond our limits; and we can only pause over the most important. In most cases we lack documents and precise information concerning their dates; and therefore the painting of the pictures is what must be relied on most frequently to determine the date to which they belong. Fortunately this is not very difficult in the case of Rubens. His evolution during his artistic career was constant; twice, at the moments we have fixed upon as the end of one period and the beginning of another, he broke abruptly with his old manner to adopt a very different one. This was the case in 1612, when, after the « Elevation of the Cross », he began the « Descent » with a notable modification of his manner, and again in 1624 when the « Adoration of the Kings » in the Antwerp Museum succeeded the « History of Marie de Medici ». But even in the interval which separates the two turning-points, his style was constantly changing. In a general way, it became freer and broader, his colour grows richer and blonder, and the play of tonality and light becomes more abundant and more marked. Thus it happens that we can generally determine with certainty within three or four years of the date of a picture.

To reduce the multitude of works now to be discussed into a little order, we shall divide them into three categories : sacred pictures, mythological pictures, and portraits.

SUBJECTS TAKEN FROM THE OLD TESTAMENT. — Rubens borrowed few subjects at this time from the Old Testament, at most five, besides the Susannah of which we have spoken : the « Judgment of Solomon », « David and Abigail », the « Reconciliation of Esau and Jacob », « Lot leaving Sodom », and « Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden ». The four first are large pictures, intended for public collections or monuments; the last is small and intended for a private apartment.

« Lot leaving Sodom » dates from 1616 or 1617 (*Œuvre*. N<sup>o</sup> 102). The patriarch, accompanied by his wife, is led by an angel walking at his side; he is followed by his two daughters, to whom he is turning round. One carries on her head a bundle containing some of the goods of the family, the other has the plate and the precious vessels in a basket; there is an angel walking between father and daughters. They are large figures broadly draped and painted in bright and speaking colours; Vandyck certainly collaborated in this picture; the second angel has his young and pleasant features. He was then certainly not more than 17 or 18, for the picture was painted in 1616 or 1617. We know from Rubens himself that this was the first to be engraved by Vorsterman when he entered the painter's service, which was in 1617. The ample mould of the figures, their wide and heavy draperies, and the simplicity of the action and colouring, all testify that the picture was painted soon after the « Unbelief of St Thomas ». It belonged at one time to the Dukes of Marlborough. In 1706 the town of Antwerp presented it to their celebrated ancestor John, the first duke. It remained in his castle of Blenheim till it was sold in 1886 with the rest of the artistic treasures of the family, and knocked down to Mr Charles Butler of London.

The « Judgment of Solomon » (*Œuvre*. N<sup>o</sup> 122) is later by one or two years. It is very well known by the fine engraving by Schelte a Bolswert, though the picture itself has very rarely been seen. It is in the Museum at Copenhagen. The composition is very animated and perfectly adapted for engraving. The executioner is a masterly figure; quite nude except for a



piece of cloth round his shoulders and loins, he is raising one arm with a violent gesture, while with the other he holds the child hanging a little way from him. The two mothers, very different in attitude and gesture, join with him to form the principal group, which is closely knit and full of life, in contrast with the calmer group of which the king forms the centre. If the composition is remarkable, the painting is much less so. It is a pupil's work, rapidly retouched by the master in the principal figures and the lighted parts. The naked executioner and the two mothers, one of whom, the kneeling one, wears a pale yellow robe, while the other, who is standing, has a bright blue robe with a white apron and purple sleeves, form a large light spot, sharply contrasting with the king in his red gold-embroidered robe and the two most prominent courtiers, one draped in violet, the other in blue. But the *ensemble* is pale in tone, without brilliance or warmth, very decorative, and betraying rather facility than any superior talent. In the background we see the rich architecture of the « Achilles among the daughters of Lycomedes ». There can be no doubt that this picture belongs to the period of the « Achilles » and the « Story of Decius ». Here, in one of the councillors in the foreground, we meet again with the priest covering his head with his cloak in the last-named work.

The picture now bears the following inscription : *Monsr Josias comte de Ransau Maral de France me l'a donné*. This nobleman was born in Denmark in 1609 and died in 1650 ; and the inscription was added by king Christian IV (1577-1648). Thus in the first half of the seventeenth century, eight years at most after the death of Rubens, this picture was in Denmark, and the Comte de Ransau was its first, or at least one of its first, owners. Several old descriptions of Belgium place it in one of the rooms in the town-hall at Brussels, among others that of Golnitzius, who visited this country in 1624 and published his travels in 1631, and the publishers of Guicciardini, whose work appeared after the latter date. But Golnitzius has made a confusion between the « Judgment of Solomon » and a picture by Rubens which was in the Brussels town-hall, representing the « Judgment of Cambyses ». There was a picture of the first subject, it is true, in the building at that date, but it was by Michiel Coxie, and had two shutters bearing portraits of aldermen.

A picture that shows a considerable resemblance to the « Judgment of Solomon » and was probably painted about the same time, that is to say in 1618, is the « Continece of Scipio » (*Œuvre*. N° 809), which, like the « Judgment of Solomon » was engraved by Schelte a Bolswert. The picture belonged in succession to the Duke of Richelieu, Queen Christina of Sweden, the Duke of Orleans, Lord Berwick, and Mr Yates, and was destroyed in 1836 in the burning of the Western Exchange in London. The composition of the two pictures is very similar, the attitudes of Solomon and of Scipio on the throne being almost identical.

« David and Abigail » (*Œuvre*. N° 120) is a less important work of the same period. In the seventeenth century it belonged to the Duke of Richelieu, who gave it to de Piles. It was bought by M. Scrips at the Secretan sale in Paris in 1889. It represents Abigail kneeling before king David, to ask pardon for her husband Nabal and to offer him gifts. David is leaning forward to raise her. Behind the two principal figures are the men and women of their trains. The picture was painted in collaboration with Rubens's pupils, and especially Vandyck. The master retouched the principal figures. Rubens has here treated a biblical subject, but he has attired his warriors like Romans, and given them helmets with large crests, breast-plates, and

spears ; his David has the look and costume of a Roman general. As a rule, Rubens takes little trouble about accuracy of costume. Everything ancient is for him Roman ; sometimes too the people he borrows from bygone centuries wear draperies that belong to no period ; a turban is usually the only sign of an Oriental.

Some of the remarks we have made on the preceding picture apply also to the « Reconciliation of Esau and Jacob » (*Œuvre*. N° 109). Jacob in bending his knee before Esau, who stretches out his hand to raise his brother, as David does to Abigail. He wears Roman garb, like the two helmeted warriors behind him ; a page holds his horse. He is accompanied by his two wives ; one kneels in the foreground holding a child which is clinging to her arm. On one side we see a troop of oxen, goats and sheep ; on the right two camels, one ridden by a negro wearing a turban. The picture is high in tone ; Jacob is wearing a green robe with a violet lining, Esau flashing armour, with a red and blue drapery thrown over it ; Rachel wears an amber-coloured skirt, and another fair woman a red robe. The painting is dull, and was done by a pupil, probably Vandyck, after a sketch by the master. The work dates from 1618 and was sold by Rubens in 1628 to the king of Spain. We do not know how it came from Madrid to Munich, where it is now in the Pinakothek. The sketch is extant and has appeared in several sales. Early copies of it may be seen in the Museums of Amsterdam and Dunkerque, and in the Colonna gallery in Rome. The Plantin-Moretus Museum has a study for the kneeling woman with the child, drawn by Rubens (*Œuvre*. N° 1422).

The « Adam and Eve » in the Museum at The Hague is very different from these large, grand and broadly painted pictures (*Œuvre*. N° 97). This finished little picture was painted by Rubens in collaboration with Jan Breughel, and is signed *J. Breughel fec.* and *Petri Pauli Rubens figr.* ; which means : « Breughel painted the picture and Rubens the figures ». It is a view of the earthly Paradise, a landscape in Eden, in which the newly created animals are collected round their masters, the two lords of Paradise. Eve is standing up and taking a branch with two apples on it, which has just been plucked by the serpent. She is offering Adam an apple ; he holds out his hand and looks at Eve as if to ask whether what she has done is not wrong. The two figures are perfectly charming ; they are young and innocent, they have suffered neither in soul nor in body ; they are two beautiful human beings, without fault or stain, as they came from the hands of the Creator ; they represent the ideal of perfection, as Rubens conceived it. Breughel painted the scene, the landscape, and the animals, with the delicacy and brilliance which are characteristic of him. Rubens worked with more care and minuteness than usual ; he might almost have painted every single hair on the heads of Adam and Eve ; their hands and faces are painted to the finest details, an enamel-like gloss is spread over their bodies, which look like mother-of-pearl ; the flesh of their faces is firmer than usual, and the dark tints exceed the brown ; while in Breughel we notice a fat touch which is not found in him elsewhere. The painting is unusual for Rubens, who at this period painted few figures so small and so finished ; the chestnut-coloured modelling of the limbs and the nobility of the features recall the works of previous years ; but the blonde and marrowy painting, the flowing outlines, and the light haze that floats over the flesh suggest that the picture was painted about 1620, although the nobility of its forms and the subtlety and delicacy of its tones make it unique among the works of that period, and even among the whole of the creations of the master.



THE MADONNA IN A GARLAND OF FLOWERS  
(Pinakothek, Munich)













SUBJECTS TAKEN FROM THE NEW TESTAMENT. — THE MADONNAS. — Passing to the New Testament subjects painted by Rubens at this time we meet first with several pictures in which he painted the Madonna and Child in a garland of flowers executed by his friend Jan Breughel. The most important is in the Pinakothek at Munich (*Œuvre*. No 198). Mary is sitting with her right arm round the infant Jesus who is standing, entirely nude, on her knee. In her left hand she holds that of her son. The group is surrounded by a painted framework encircled with a garland of flowers, and around the flowers sport eleven little angels, six on the right and five on the left. The Madonna and the angels are among Rubens's most delightful creations; the little celestial beings form a circle of fresh and rosy flesh about the flowers, more attractive and sweeter to the eye than the flowers themselves, which nevertheless are among the best of Breughel's works. The Madonna presents a close resemblance to that of the « Christ à la paille », and dates from the same time, or even earlier, from 1616 or 1617.



THE MADONNA WITH ANGELS (Louvre, Paris).

The Madonna bought in 1887 for the Hermitage at St Petersburg, which came from the Galitzine collection, is very similar to this and of the same date.

The Madrid Museum also has a Madonna in a garland of flowers painted by Jan Breughel (*Œuvre*. No 200). In this, the mother is sitting with the child on her knees, and laying her hand on his neck. Two angels are crowning her with roses.

In the Louvre we find a fourth (*Œuvre*. No 199). The child is on the Virgin's knees and putting his arms round her neck. She is looking at him tenderly, with one hand on his back and another beneath him. On the right a little angel is holding a crown of flowers over the

child's head ; on the left, in an uncertain light, are seven small heads of angels. The medallion containing the group is surrounded by a garland of flowers in which snakes, birds, a small monkey, insects and lizards are playing. The picture was painted for Cardinal Federigo Borromeo ; Breughel sent it him on the 5<sup>th</sup> September, 1621, and wrote the same day to Ercole Bianchi, the Cardinal's secretary : « I profit by the occasion of the dispatch of some » merchandise to Enomi to send you another picture, which is the finest and most excellent » work I have ever painted. M. Rubens also has given a proof of his talent in the central » medallion, in which you may see a very pretty Madonna. The birds and animals are painted » from life, from those in the possession of the most Serene the Infanta » (1).

In the gallery of Count Schönborn there used to be another Holy Family, painted by Rubens, in an octagonal medallion, round which Breughel had painted a superb garland. This was sold in 1895 with the Lyne Stephens collection at Christie's in London, and now belongs to the Fine Art Museum in New York.

The « Madonna with the child Jesus on her knees » (*Œuvre*. N<sup>o</sup> 197) in the Brussels Museum belongs to the same date. The child is holding his mother's gauze veil in one hand, and a myosotis bloom in the other. In the background is a landscape ; on the left, rose bushes in flower. The landscape and the flowers are painted in the manner of Breughel, probably by Ykens.

The « Madonna » (*Œuvre*. V, 319) in the possession of the Berlin Museum was painted about 1620. The Virgin is sitting at a table covered with a red flowered cloth, and turning over the leaves of an illuminated book of hours. On the table lies a basket of plums ; in the background is a landscape ; on the left rose bushes raise their flowering branches. The basket of fruit is by Snijders, the landscape by van Uden ; the flowers are treated in the manner of Jan Breughel, but by a different artist. The cloth and the book of hours are also by a collaborator.

Besides the « Madonnas » in which Jan Breughel and other flower-painters assisted, Rubens painted several others. The earliest, dating from the beginning of this period and probably from shortly after 1615, is the « Virgin with Angels » (*Œuvre*. N<sup>o</sup> 204) in the Louvre. Mary is standing in the centre of the picture, carrying the infant Jesus, whose little arm is round his mother's neck ; the group is supported by some half-dozen angels without wings ; other celestial spirits, to the number of about forty, form a circle around them. The picture is remarkable for the rapidity and lightness of the painting and for the rosy flesh, with blueish and transparent shadows.

Among the « Madonnas » mentioned in the catalogues or known from engravings we must note further the picture that was copied and sung in 1621 by Anna Roemers Visscher, the Dutch poetess, who was remarkable for her varied talents (*Œuvre*. N<sup>o</sup> 187). It is a small picture « in which we see the charming traits of a mother suckling her dear babe who lies » before her. There ! little heart, says she, thou hast drunk thy fill now. And once more » pressing her breast she sprinkles the dainty face of the little innocent with white milk » (2).

The original of this « Madonna » has not been discovered, and we only know it from

(1) GIOVANNI CRIVELLI : *Giovanni Brueghel*, Milan, 1868, p. 272.

(2) *Alle de Gedichten van Anna Roemers Visscher*, edited by Nic. Beets. Utrecht, Beyers, 1881, II, p. 85.

replicas, copies, or engravings. We saw one of these copies in 1896, at a picture-dealer's in Brussels; it was painted on a panel, 2 ft. 1 in. high by 1 ft. 8 in. wide; there was another at the same time at M. Ravaisson's in Paris, and a third we discovered in 1898 in the Corsini Museum in Rome, where it appears under the name of Abraham van Diepenbeeck. In all these pictures the painting is hard and the tonality dark brown; the infant Jesus has a round head that might have been turned on a lathe. These details are not of a nature to justify the rhapsodies of Anna Roemers Visscher, nor her praise of the colour: « the white that time cannot yellow ».

Another « Madonna » was engraved by Lucas Vorsterman, and in a comparatively clumsy way, which compels us to conjecture that it was one of the first he did for Rubens. Consequently it would date from 1617. The child is lying on a bed like a sofa; the mother is sitting behind the bed, and clasping her hands as she looks at her son (*Œuvre*. N° 188).

Rubens painted a number of Madonnas about this time. They may be ranked among his leading productions. He did not attach the same interest to the painting of the Virgin-mother and her Child as Raphael, Andrea del Sarto and the early Italian masters. His Virgins have not the lively tenderness, the virginity of form and the simple, touching, almost childlike purity which characterized the Madonnas of his predecessors. He made them women more remarkable for the splendour of their figures than the profundity of their sentiment. But the execution renders them attractive; their white and pink flesh, soft and impregnated with light, the brilliant colouring of their red and blue robes, and in some pictures the tenderness they show for the child, often make them most sympathetic figures.

PICTURES OF CHILDREN. — Rubens took more pleasure in painting the infant Jesus and the angels. These plump little beings with their natural grace, their delicate flesh, their lustrous skin, their roguish eyes and their delight in life, were his favourites, and he never ceased painting them. In his sacred pictures the little angels hover in the air, carry the Virgin in her Assumption, frolic about her, and lay crowns on her head and her Son's. In his Holy Families again there are children, Jesus and his playfellows; in his mythological pictures, the « Ceres » for example, we again see babes, hanging garlands of flowers round the statue of the goddess; in the « Rape of Orithyia by Boreas », children are throwing snowballs; with Venus they appear as little Cupids; in the « Bacchus and Silenus » they behave in a mischievous and sometimes incongruous way; and we find them in countless other pictures. Sometimes they become the principal characters, as in the picture of Jesus and St John playing with a sheep which is brought by two angels. The original work, unfortunately much injured, is in the Imperial Museum at Vienna (*Œuvre*. N° 186); there are replicas in various places, notably in the Berlin Museum.

In another picture we find, instead of four children, only Jesus and St John, the former sitting on the ground, and the latter riding on the sheep. One of the well-known copies of this picture is in the Balbi palace at Genoa (*Œuvre*. N° 185). When I first saw it, many years ago, I took it for the original work; there are a number of replicas of it.

In another picture, belonging to the Steengracht van Duivenvoorde collection at The Hague (*Œuvre*. N° 184), the infant Jesus is represented alone, sitting on a red cushion



and raising his hand to bless the earth. Many replicas of this work are mentioned, notably one in the Duke of Leuchtenberg's gallery at St Petersburg. We can understand that these pictures had a great success among Catholic families ; they were pleasant to look at and of moderate size, and were counted among the most delightful productions of Rubens's brush. All these works belong to the same period and were painted about 1620.

Two years before, when his eldest son might have been four years old, Rubens painted the most remarkable of the pictures of children which he had produced : the « Seven children carrying a garland of flowers » in the Pinakothek at Munich (*Œuvre*. N° 865). It is not a sacred picture, but the children are none the less charming for not being angels. They differ from the celestial spirits ; their heads are truer to human nature. Some of them are evidently portraits, and have a touch of the irregular and personal in the features which the master took from life. They are carrying a bunch of fruit, and it is a real burden to them. The first is holding the end of the garland over his shoulder and walking with bowed head, his hair hanging over his forehead, bent under the weight ; three others follow him, holding up the fruit, one over his shoulder, another under his arms ; yet another walks behind, with the burden on his shoulder and the ribbon in his hand. In him we recognize Albert, Rubens's young son. Two of the children are sitting on the ground, holding up the bunch with heads and hands. The grace of the composition and the painting are inexpressible. More roguish, jolly, and healthy little rascals have never been painted. Every one of them has a different, but perfectly natural position ; all the faces have different expressions, and show an individual character and sentiment ; together they form the happiest and most skilfully managed group. There is, moreover, no affectation in the movements nor the forms : it is nature herself. The master rightly felt that in this case nothing could surpass the truth, and that for softness and opulence of flesh, there was no call for invention. In Rubens's life-time this picture belonged to one of his chief admirers and patrons, Antonius Triest, bishop of Ghent, for whom, probably, it was painted, and in whose inventory it appears in 1657. The bunch of fruit was painted by Snijders and is one of the best of his productions.

This picture and the Madonna surrounded by a garland of flowers painted by Jan Breughel, and the angels by Rubens's hand which are also at Munich and have been spoken of above, are all equally of the highest artistic value. It is probable, too, that they were painted about the same time. But one difference may be noticed. When painting in collaboration with Breughel, Rubens heightened his colours to bring them into harmony with the brighter colours of his collaborator. His little angels have redder flesh with brown shadows ; the light plays on their contours and there are blueish tints on the salient parts of their flesh. The necessity of strengthening the tone obliged him to put a spot of red on the wings of the little angel in the upper left corner, although he had meant to give him white wings. In working with Snijders, Rubens made no change in his manner. Though his collaborator's tones were more varied and more brilliant than his own, harmony was no less easily attained between them. Rubens painted his children carrying fruits with more breadth and softness than the angels that surround the Madonna. In the first picture the flesh is whiter, milkier and not so red ; the shadows on the modelling are grey, but lit by a play of light. In general the tone of this artistic gem is colder, but it has more subtlety and nobility than that in the « Madonna of the garland ».



THE GARLAND OF FRUITS  
(Pinakothek, Munich)







H. J. van der Werf: Putti mit Früchten, 1660.



The spectacle of the same man painting about the same time such appalling drama as his « Last Judgment », and such charming idylls of childhood, in which the freshness of the flesh rivals the simplicity of the sentiment and the grace of the attitudes, is conclusive proof of the manifold and various gifts with which the colossal genius was endowed, and his extreme sensibility to the most opposite impressions.

Groups of angels and children were always a favourite subject with Italian painters. Everyone knows the babes that appear with the Madonna and the saints in the early productions of their school, playing in peaceful meditation on the mandoline or the viol at the foot of the Blessed Virgin's throne, those who in Fra Giovanni da Fiesole's « Coronation of the Virgin » play about her, and those who raise their ecstatic looks to her in Raphael's « Sixtine Madonna ». In proportion as the mystical conception of painting gave place to the realistic, the use of angels became rarer. Raphael's successors still attach great importance to these merry little creatures. Giulio Romano or one of his pupils executed a series of cartoons for tapestry which is known



THE HOLY FAMILY (Pitti Gallery, Florence).

under the name of the « Children at play ». A contemporary of Rubens, Francesco Albani (1578-1660), made them the chief, and often the only figures in his pictures. More than one Italian painter painted children carrying garlands of flowers, but no one did so with the vivacity, the movement, and the spirit which Rubens lent to his charming creatures. With him they are no longer calm and contemplative spectators, or more supers; they take part in the action in more ways than one, and in one case, that of the picture in the Pinakothek at Munich, they are the only characters. In every instance they are in movement, at play, living the natural life of infancy; in every instance their little naked bodies spread sweet, soft tones from their



plump flesh and the gaiety of their graceful and sprightly play. They bear an important part, too, in Rubens's Holy Families.

HOLY FAMILIES. — During the period we are now concerned with, Rubens painted the Holy Family, Mary with her Son and other relatives, more than once. The first in date is the « Virgin with the parrot » of the Antwerp Museum, and the next, that in the collection of Sir Richard Wallace in London (*Œuvre*. N° 233). It is held to be the best Rubens ever painted, and deserves its reputation. The Virgin sits in the centre of the group; her head is covered with a dark veil which throws a faint shadow over her face. The infant Jesus is standing on a pedestal, which is partly hidden by a cloak. He is holding out his arms towards the little John, who is sitting, completely nude, on Elizabeth's knees. His hands are clasped, and he is looking at the Saviour with an expression of profound love. St Joseph is standing against a pillar behind Mary and looking with emotion on the gracious scene. The painting is delicate, and the colour warm; the infant Jesus is especially splendid. The Virgin, whose face is half in shadow, recalls the woman *au chapeau de paille*, Susannah Fourment, and the little Jesus has the features of Albert Rubens. The picture was painted in 1616 or 1617 and is entirely the master's work. The writers who have praised it most highly, criticize its want of religious sentiment; according to them, the Virgin and Child are no more than a mother and her babe, faithfully reproduced from real life. The same observation might be applied to all Rubens's Madonnas. If it be a fault, this picture reveals it neither more nor less than all the others. Mols claims that this « Holy Family » comes from the oratory of the Archduke Albert, for whom it was painted. In 1770, it belonged to Prince Charles of Lorraine, governor of the Austrian Netherlands; after his death in 1780 it passed into the Emperor of Austria's collection. Joseph II presented it to Burtin, the celebrated Brussels collector. After several changes of proprietor, it was bought in 1846 by the Marquis of Hertford. From him it was inherited by Sir Richard Wallace, and finally it was bequeathed to the United Kingdom with all the rest of the rich collection of which it formed part, which has been opened as a special Museum.

The « Holy Family » of the Pitti gallery in Florence was painted after this picture, probably in 1618 (*Œuvre*. N° 228). The infant Jesus is sitting in his cradle and caressing the little St John who is standing by him; Mary, Joseph and St Anne are looking on at the scene attentively and tenderly. The painting has suffered: the figures of the Virgin and St Anne are blemished and the children's heads have lost their original brilliance, but the characters all seem to be Rubens's own work, and the accessories have been retouched by him. An engraving of the picture was published by Lucas Vorsterman; possibly it was not engraved by him in person, but it must have appeared at the same time as the plates signed by the engraver.

Among these latter one « Holy Family » must be mentioned (*Œuvre*. N° 227), which was engraved in 1620 and painted a short time before. Here we see the Virgin sitting on a bench with the child on her knees. He is fondling his mother's chin with his hand, and pressing close to her in a caressing way. The little St John, standing by Mary, looks on at the play. St Joseph has his hand at the mouth of the sheep which accompanies St John; and St Elizabeth is leaning both hands on the cradle, which stands in the foreground. The picture is pale and

dull in colour, and was painted by a pupil after the master's design. The Duke of Marlborough took it in 1708 from the castle of Tervueren, where it was included among the works of art belonging to our rulers. It was bought by Mr Charles Butler at the sale of the Marlborough collection.

All the « Holy Families » and the others which we owe to Rubens, are simple and touching pictures of family life, which show us one or two mothers rejoicing in the health and happiness of their children, and a father who looks on at the scene in the joy and kindness of his heart. The children are plump, graceful and fair, like the real Flemish children. The mothers, like all his Madonnas, are white-skinned, fair-haired women, the women whom Rubens had made his ideal of beauty and whom he found all the handsomer the more rarely he met them. They wear brilliant-coloured robes of red and blue, thus uniting the brightest shades with the most brilliant complexions, to express all the power of natures full of richness and life. There is no question of religion in these pictures, unless we give the name of religion to the cultivation of maternal love, juvenile innocence, and domestic happiness.

Besides the pictures he painted for churches, Rubens borrowed from sacred history the subjects of other great works belonging to this period.

CHRIST IN THE HOUSE OF SIMON THE PHARISEE. — One of the most important is the « Christ in the house of Simon the Pharisee » (*Œuvre*. N<sup>o</sup> 254). The story in St Luke, chapter VII, is well known : « And one of the Pharisees desired him that he would eat with him. And » he went into the Pharisee's house, and sat down to meat. And, behold, a woman in the city, » which was a sinner, when she knew that Jesus sat at meat in the Pharisee's house, brought » an alabaster box of ointment, and stood at his feet behind him weeping, and began to wash » his feet with tears, and did wipe them with the hairs of her head, and kissed his feet, and » anointed them with the ointment. Now when the Pharisee which had bidden him saw it, he » spake within himself, saying, This man, if he were a prophet, would have known who and » what manner of woman this is that toucheth him : for she is a sinner. And Jesus answering » said unto him, Simon, I have somewhat to say unto thee. And he saith, Master, say on. There » was a certain creditor which had two debtors : the one owed five hundred pence, and the » other fifty. And when they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both. Tell me » therefore, which of them will love him most ? Simon answered and said, I suppose that he, » to whom he forgave most. And he said unto him, Thou hast rightly judged. And he turned » to the woman, and said unto Simon, Seest thou this woman ? I entered into thine house, » thou gavest me no water for my feet : but she hath washed my feet with tears, and wiped » them with the hairs of her head. Thou gavest me no kiss : but this woman since the time I » came in hath not ceased to kiss my feet. My head with oil thou didst not anoint : but this » woman hath anointed my feet with ointment. Wherefore I say unto thee, Her sins, which » are many, are forgiven ; for she loved much : but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth » little. And he said unto her, Thy sins are forgiven. And they that sat at meat with him » began to say within themselves, Who is this that forgiveth sins also ? And he said to the » woman, Thy faith hath saved thee ; go in peace ».

This striking parable, with its entirely new moral, preaching the saving virtue of faith and

the remission of sins, raising the fallen and defying the proud, provided Rubens with a subject to his taste. The sinner has fallen at Christ's feet, which she is washing with her tears and drying with her hair. By his side, three of his apostles are sitting at table, one reflecting on his master's words, another turning to his neighbour and discussing the lesson read to the Pharisees, and the third looking Christ in the face with an expression of hatred. The Pharisees feel that the reformer's lesson comes home to them. Who is this man who thus forgets the sinner's shameful past, and addresses her words of pardon and praise; this man who, calm



CHRIST IN THE HOUSE OF SIMON THE PHARISEE (Hermitage, St Petersburg).

and gentle as if his words admitted of no contradiction, misprizes their morality, their lofty respectability, and speaks to them words of reproach and condemnation? The master of the house, with his goblet in his hand, his corpulent body swathed in a variegated robe, and his ample chin falling in three folds upon his chest, is looking at the audacious visitor with amazement. His neighbour fixes an incisive, penetrating and questioning glance on Christ; a third leans forward over the table with a threatening air, and sarcasm in his mouth; the fourth fixes his great eyes in irritation on this guest with such revolutionary ideas; he is about to rise and reproach him with his scandalous words. The last, an old bald man, remains a stranger to all these forms of indignation; he has put his spectacles on his nose and is ogling the beautiful sinner, who is kneeling with shoulders and breast half-bare. And while the storm gathers, servants bring dainty dishes, a dressed peacock, a juicy melon, and pastry. It is a



drama by Rubens, in a setting by Veronese. The most widely contrasted sensations, the most different passions are expressed in it with ease and fulness, in the richest colours.

Rubens took up the central idea again in a later and more dramatic work, « Herod's Feast ». The apparition of Salome bearing the head of St John the Baptist on a charger throws the guests at the royal banquet into terror. Here as there, we meet with the corpulent host wearing a cap of velvet lined with fur, and the negro carrying a dish in his hands high above his head. The general arrangement is the same: a young woman in the foreground, behind the table the diners in various positions, behind them the servants, an open portico, and on one side a cylindrical column.

The « Christ in the house of Simon », belonging to the Hermitage at St Petersburg, is superb in composition and very decorative, but too insipid and lacking in strength in the figures; it was painted between 1615 and 1620 and probably nearer the latter date than the former. It was painted by pupils after a sketch by Rubens himself, which is in the Museum of the Academy of Fine Arts at Vienna. The master painted the heads of the principal characters, and largely retouched the accessory figures and the draperies.

He painted a special study, now belonging to the Berlin Museum, for one of the most vigorous heads, that of an apostle (? Judas), who is fixing a hostile look on Christ.

The Hermitage at St Petersburg also has an early copy of the picture, attributed in succession to Jordaens and Vandyck, but the work of neither of them.



ST. AMBROSE AND THE EMPEROR THEODOSIUS (Imperial Museum, Vienna).

ST. AMBROSE AND THE EMPEROR THEODOSIUS. — Another very important work is the

St Ambrose forbidding the Emperor Theodosius to enter Milan Cathedral » (*Œuvre*. N° 387). Theodosius the Great had captured the town of Thessalonica in 390, and had ordered an appalling massacre of the insurgents. On his return to Italy, he wished to visit the church of Milan ; but Ambrose, the bishop, forbade him to enter until he should have done penance. The emperor is represented in a humble and almost suppliant attitude before the prelate, who, clad in his episcopal robes, has taken his stand before the door of the temple to deprive the prince of access to it. Behind him are five priests ; a choir-boy with a torch in his hand stands in the foreground, and three warriors accompany Theodosius. All the characters are standing, and almost in a line ; two of them only are in action. Their gestures are full of nobility, their forms magnificent and their heads superb. It would be impossible to conceive a more majestic figure than the aged bishop with his long beard and his imposing features, his gorgeous mitre on his head, and over his shoulders his rich cope embroidered in gold with small decorative subjects. Draped in a purple cloak over his breast-plate, with the crown of oak-leaves on his brow, the emperor is a mighty figure. All the other heads are very Rubenian ; the strongly built warriors, the venerable priests, an ecclesiastic with the emaciated face of an ascetic, and a layman in the prime of life with curly hair whom we have met in preceding works of Rubens, among others in the « Christ before Pilate ». All the characters are robust, and the painting is like them ; the colour is rich, the heads stand out in full light, while the lower parts fade away in warmer tones. Rubens painted all the heads himself, and repainted much of the draperies. The picture dates, beyond question, from 1619. It contains more than one acquaintance of that year or the year before. The pontifex maximus of the « Story of Decius » here plays the rôle of St Ambrose ; Decius himself has become the Emperor Theodosius ; the priest with the ascetic face is the same as one of the monks supporting St Francis in the Last Communion, and the monk holding a torch in the foreground of that picture is here the choir-boy wearing the same surplice, which has been freshly unfolded.

The picture belongs to the Imperial Museum in Vienna. Vandyck was working in Rubens's studio when the picture was painted ; he made a little replica of it which is in the National Gallery in London. The pupil introduced notable modifications into the original composition ; most of the heads are changed ; behind the emperor a dog is climbing the steps of the church.

OTHER SUBJECTS TAKEN FROM THE NEW TESTAMENT. — « The Executioner giving Salome the head of St John the Baptist » is of less importance (*Œuvre*. N° 241). The superb daughter of Herodias, built like a young giantess, is holding the charger, on which Herod's assassin has just laid the head of the Baptist ; a young maid-servant with fair hair is helping to carry the horrible burden. A picture treating this subject, which Waagen and Smith regard as the original, is to be found in the Earl of Carlisle's gallery at Castle Howard ; we have not seen it, but to judge by the reproduction in the Dresden Museum, it is a work of the roughest painting and colouring, the most remarkable part being the head of St John, which is treated with much care and was painted about the year 1620.

The « Angels appearing to the Holy Women near the sepulchre of Christ » (*Œuvre*. N° 340) belongs to the same period, and is of no greater importance. Six women come to visit the tomb of Christ ; two angels appear to them and tell them that Jesus is risen. The picture

must have been painted about 1620. Vorsterman engraved it about the same date. It is in the gallery of the monastery of Mölk in Lower Austria. A copy of reduced size belongs to the Czernin gallery at Vienna.

The reproduction of the « Repentant Magdalen » (*Œuvre*. N° 470), of which the Vienna Museum possesses the most remarkable example (and that none too remarkable in itself), was published by Vorsterman and probably engraved by him or under his direction in 1620. The work must have been painted about the same time. The saint is sitting with outstretched arms and clasped hands in an attitude of despair. Her hair has fallen loose; she lifts her tear-filled eyes to heaven; her half-open bodice exposes her opulent breast. The picture is painted on canvas, and was bought in 1786 by the Emperor Joseph II of the Count von Nostitz of Prague. Another « Repentant Magdalen », painted on wood, formed part of Rubens's estate at his death; it was a copy of the preceding picture made before the death of Isabella Brant. Early replicas may now be seen in the Museums at Cassel and Schwerin. In the last century there was a « Magdalen », two-thirds life-size, in the Stadtholders' castle at Loo in Holland.

#### MYTHOLOGICAL SUBJECTS.

The mythological pictures painted by Rubens in the half-dozen years we are treating of were not so numerous — nor were they, indeed, at any period of his career — as his religious pictures, but some of them are of real interest.

Among the earliest of the series, we must mention the « Neptune and Amphitrite » (*Œuvre*. N° 647) in the Berlin Museum. On a little mound on the edge of the sea sits Neptune, with crossed legs, a trident in his hand, his head crowned with a wreath of sea-weed and his eyes fixed on a marine god and goddess who are bringing him pearls and precious shells in a large conch. By his side, like him entirely nude, stands Amphitrite, with one hand on the god's shoulder and with the other choosing a branch of coral from among the treasures offered by the divinities of the sea. A little Love is twining a rope of pearls round her arm. Behind them is a great sail attached to a mast and bellied by the wind. Numerous animals of strange form surround the divine pair: a hippopotamus stands by them on the shore; a nereid has her arm round the neck of a crocodile rising from the water. On the left a rhinoceros shows his monstrous head, while a lion and a tiger are glaring at each other in play; on that side also are two marine gods, one of whom is throwing water into the sea out of a large conch.

The subject treated in this canvas, the god of the sea and his beloved receiving tribute from the Ocean and from foreign countries, was an extremely popular one with the people of Antwerp. In the annual procession of the kermesse, one of the cars represented a scene of this kind. Rubens here employed the decorative style which suited a popular subject. The handsome nude bodies and the graceful attitudes of the god and goddess, the robust limbs and powerful gestures of the marine divinities, and the strange forms of the wild animals, make up an *ensemble* that is full of charm. The painting is smooth and finished with nervous care; the dominant tonality is cold, dry, and a little stiff, the modelling of the arms and legs is indicated by tones of blueish grey. The shadow thrown by Amphitrite's sail is very transparent; the roundness of her limbs is accentuated by brown shadows into which the reflected rays put red



lights. The colours are few and pale; the scarlet stuff blown out behind Amphitrite, and the blue drapery thrown over Neptune's legs, are the dominating notes and stand out vividly against the brown sail stretched in the background.

This learned painting, these calculated effects, pale cold tones and graceful emotionless attitudes, are thoroughly characteristic of Rubens's manner at this period. Compared with the pictures of 1614 and 1615, this work is clearer and more blonde in tone; next to those of



NEPTUNE AND AMPHITRITE (Museum, Berlin).

1618 or 1619 it looks dry and pale. There can be no doubt that it belongs to the beginning of the period we are now concerned with, that is to say, to 1616 or 1617. Till lately it belonged to Count von Schönborn of Vienna. In 1881 it was bought by the Berlin Museum for £ 8,000. On that occasion a warm and long discussion arose on the authenticity of the picture, in which some refused to see a genuine Rubens. The truth is that the figures of Neptune and Amphitrite, the marine deities and the child, are Rubens's work and that he retouched the animals, while the other accessories were painted by a pupil, probably Jan Wildens.

The « Four parts of the World » (*Œuvre*. No 834) in the Imperial Museum at Vienna, have a certain relationship to this picture, while being superior to it. Here we see four river-gods, each lovingly enfolding his goddess in his arms. Old Danube with one arm resting on an oar is looking quietly at his fair companion; the Nile has his arm about a negress, and a crocodile in front of him; the Ganges is attended by a tigress suckling her young, and the



CASTOR AND POLLUX CARRYING OFF THE DAUGHTERS OF LEUCIPPUS  
(Pinakothek, Munich)

lights. The colours are few and pale: the scarlet stuff blown out behind Amphitrite, and the blue drapery thrown over Neptune's legs, are the *only* strong ones, and stand out vividly against the brown sail stretched in the background.

This learned painting, these calculated effects, pale cold *figures* and *careless* carelessness attitudes, are thoroughly characteristic of Rubens's manner at this period. Compared with the pictures of 1614 and 1615, this work is clearer and more blank in tone, and more formal.



NEPTUNE AND AMPHITRITE (Rubens, 1616)

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**CASTOR AND POLLUX CARRYING OFF THE DAUGHTERS OF LEUCIPPUS**  
(Pinakothek, Munich)







great American river, the Amazon, has a brown-skinned spouse. They are four superb men, with the limbs of giants, bushy beards, and flowing hair, pluming themselves on their strength and majesty; and the women are four of the fairest of their race and most alluring of their sex. In the foreground we see the tigress lying down with her cubs, two children playing with the crocodile, precious urns with the river flowing from them, and a landscape grown with



THE FOUR PARTS OF THE WORLD (Imperial Museum, Vienna).

aquatic plants. The groups are elegantly arranged, the colours rich and the light warm; the picture is a feast for the eye.

Here we meet again the tiger, the crocodile, and the little Love, the water in the foreground and the reeds in the background, which we saw in the preceding picture. Neptune and Amphitrite have become four rivers with their companions, and the spread sail has turned into drapery; the kinship of the two works, therefore, is plain, but they were not born at the same time. The « Four parts of the world », with its more massive and opulent figures, its warm and varied colouring, is closer akin to the Medici gallery, and cannot date from before 1620, but must belong to that or the following year. As in the « Neptune and Amphitrite », the principal figures are entirely painted by Rubens, as also is the tiger; but the accessories are by Wildens, and a pupil, possibly Justus van Egmont, collaborated in the figures in the background.

From 1617 dates a large mythological picture, « Dead Adonis wept by Venus » (*Œuvre*.



Nº 696), which was formerly in the Hope collection and in 1898 belonged to M. Blondel in Paris. The fair hunter is stretched dead on the ground in the centre of a landscape; Venus is kneeling near his head; a Nymph crouching behind the body raises the wide shroud that covers it; two other of the goddess's women look on with gestures of despair at the scene of mourning; Cupid, standing at Adonis's feet, is taking off his quiver, as if he never wished to use his arrows again. The dead hunter's two dogs are there; one of them is licking his master's blood as it trickles over the ground. The Venus recalls that of the Antwerp Museum; her expression is more like indifference than affliction; but on the other hand Adonis's expression is striking. Dead or dying, he still keeps his gaze upon his beloved, and in his dulled eyes reign infinite love and grief. The greater part of the picture is Rubens's own painting; the two standing nymphs, the hounds and the landscape, are the only parts painted by pupils and retouched by Rubens.

The « Rape of the daughters of Leucippus by Castor and Pollux » in the Pinakothek at Munich (*Œuvre*. Nº 579) is a still more remarkable picture. The two twin heroes, the sons of Leda, come up on horseback and surprise Phoebe and Hilaira entirely nude in the country. One of the riders is still in the saddle, and is drawing one of the sisters towards him by means of a drapery that he has thrown beneath her; a little Cupid is holding his horse by the bridle. The second rider has dismounted, and while he helps his brother by supporting the arm and shoulder of his beloved, he carries off the other sister for himself. Meanwhile his horse rears and neighs with patience. The group is a marvel of beauty and power. The young bronzed warriors contrast with the plump fairness of the charming maidens whom they are trying to carry off without hurting them; the sisters defend themselves, try to break free, stretch out their arms, turn away their heads, and become all the more beautiful for the vain struggles which only serve to accentuate the loveliness of their forms. The hand of Vandyck may be recognised in the painting of the horses, the dapple-grey and bay brown of the « Lion-hunt », and also in the figures, which have not the colour, the light, and the brilliance of Rubens's brush. Certain parts have been repainted by the master, like the amber-coloured drapery lying on the ground, and the flesh of the figures, especially that of the woman lifted from the ground, whose legs have tints of luminous red which are further emphasized by the reflection of the red drapery close by. The picture certainly belongs to 1619 or 1620. Rubens had then reached his highest degree of perfection in the art of composition and grouping. He had found the just mean between the extreme temerity which characterizes some of the works painted after his return from Italy, like the « Battle of the Amazons », the « Last Judgment », and the « Hunting-pieces », and the calm and almost timid moderation we find in other works: he unites the most lively movement with the most charming attitudes. He amuses himself, we might almost say, by combining human bodies into schemes, the elegance of which becomes more striking the more they are examined and analysed. He bends and curves his figures with an ease and a certainty in which there is no rashness, scarcely even boldness, but which combine the most natural elements with incomparable grace.

Another « Rape » dating from the same period is that of Orithyia, the beautiful daughter of Erechtheus, king of Athens, by Boreas, the North Wind (*Œuvre*. Nº 578). The crabbled greybeard has seized the fair-skinned maiden in his arms with savage violence, and rushes

with her through snow and tempest. She defends herself, struggling with her arms and throwing back her head; around the group that cleaves the air, little Loves are amusing themselves by throwing snow-balls. Here the movement is more impetuous; the position of the bending bodies, beautiful as it is, is chiefly astonishing for its audacity. The picture, which belongs to the Museum of Fine Arts at Vienna, is entirely by the hand of Rubens; the tonality is clear, the shadows are a warm brown, the outlines firm and the flesh brilliant.

A third « Rape » is that of Cassandra by Ajax, son of Peleus, in the Liechtenstein gallery (*Œuvre*. N° 569). Here the action is in the first stage. Ajax is approaching Cassandra, who is sitting near the altar of Minerva, and seizing her by the arm.

To the same period belong several pictures taken from mythology, in which Rubens painted the figures and Breughel the accessories: the « Three Graces carrying a basket of flowers on their heads » (*Œuvre*. N° 614) in the Stockholm Museum, and another in the Museum of the Academy of Fine Arts at Vienna, the « Nymphs picking fruit » of the Museum at The Hague, and the « Head of Medusa » (*Œuvre*. N° 636) in the Imperial Museum at Vienna.

THE PROCESSION OF SILENUS. — Various mythological pictures of a very original kind were painted about the same time. The subject of them is the « Procession of Silenus ». They are alike both in conception and in execution and were all painted in the short space of two or three years. Silenus is one of the beings placed by Greek mythology between the gods and men; the preceptor of Bacchus, he was the faithful companion of the jolliest of gods; he had helped him to invent the cultivation of the vine, and helped him still more actively in enjoying the products of the invention. Rubens more than once represented Bacchus in the guise of a young and lovely god sitting on a barrel, while his cup is filled by a female faun, or else drunk and led by his troop of drinkers, gay companions and merry bacchantes. The young god drinks without stint, but always has some regard for the proprieties; his Olympian nature preserves him from too deep a degradation, and his youthful and healthy constitution resists the consequences of his excesses; he remains lovely and jolly even when his legs are beginning to refuse their office. With Silenus, on the other hand, the results of drunkenness are worse and more repugnant. He is old, his limbs have lost their elasticity, his power of resistance has diminished, and he becomes the deplorable victim of his too pronounced taste for « old men's milk ». After the orgy, his faithful companions bring him back to his abode in a jovial triumphal procession. A satyr and a negro support the hoary drunkard; a flute-player heads the rout, and the train is formed by a number of boon-companions of both sexes, who drink, gambol, and exchange caresses. That is how Rubens generally conceives his processions of Silenus, and it is not hard to see that he enjoys all this licence.

He that had so often glorified in his gods and demi-gods nobility of form, grace of movement and the harmonious development of fair bodies, felt the need of sometimes also painting man given over to his less noble instincts; the man of duty, of dignified life, and nobility of soul, desired to show the aberrations of the human animal in their most grotesque and brutal forms; but naturally, he never proposed to paint debauchery in all its gross reality and all the vulgarity of its manifestations. An observer of human nature, he was anything but

a realist, in the modern sense of the term. Following the example of the ancients, he chose beings of inferior essence to exhibit in slavery to low passions.

It must be admitted that this *rôle* of moralist does not suit him, or rather that the picturesque character of his models in this deplorable condition brought a smile to his lips that had more kindness in it than dislike; for, degraded as he makes these victims of intemperance, at bottom they have not the look of victims; in vain he insisted on their vileness and strove to exhibit them as fallen below the level of humanity; he could not succeed. He was and continued to be too much a Fleming to be without interest in the rolling march of the intoxicated troop, or not to feel himself attracted by their comic ways and their joyful shouts. There was a life, an expansion, in them that he found seductive; their excitement communicates itself to his brush and makes it sparkling. All timidity disappears from these pictures; the colour flashes and glows like the laughter of his faunesses; it flames like the hot humour of the jolly band.

Here again, he went for his original model to the ancients. On a marble tomb in the Capitol Museum, among others, may be seen a bas-relief representing a procession, headed by a Silenus led by a satyr and a fauness and followed by a Bacchus, behind whom come men, women, elephants and tigers. There is little movement in the whole procession, and still less freedom or licence. In the Museo Nazionale at Rome, again, there is a feast of Bacchus with a drunken Silenus led by a satyr and followed by a large number of fauns and Bacchantes who form a most jovial group. Rubens transposed this mythology, and infused it with gross Flemish jollity. Its restrained gaiety became with him an untempered roar of laughter: the human side of his demi-gods is thrown into full light, and the modern painter gives free play to the pleasure he takes in setting the jovial troop in motion.

Of all his Processions of Silenus, that in the Hermitage at St Petersburg (*Œuvre*. No 679) is the smallest in size and probably also the earliest. Silenus goes first, with his head lying on his chest and his paunch protruding before him; in one hand he holds a jar with the wine running out of it. He is supported by a fauness, and a negress carrying a tambourine. A satyr comes behind them, and two others are perched on trees in the background. In the foreground lie two drunken female fauns, one of whom is suckling her two infants. Near the negress a tiger is rising up against the trunk of a tree and looking threateningly at the faun perched above. The picture is entirely painted by Rubens; it is rich and soft in colour, and dates from about 1618. It appears to have formed part of the collection of the Archdukes Albert and Isabella, for Jan Breughel included it in the gallery of these princes when he painted it in his symbolical picture of « Sight » in the Madrid Museum.

The canvas at Munich (*Œuvre*. No 676) is larger and contains more figures. Silenus is supported and led in the same way; a satyr with cloven hoofs holds him by one arm, and a negro, who is mockingly pinching his fleshy leg, has the other. Before them march another satyr playing a flute, and a woman with a jar of wine in her hand; behind them comes a young fauness accompanied by an admirer of her savage beauty and an old satyr caressing a bacchante of some years. In the foreground we see a little satyr leading a pair of goats, a drunken fauness leaning forward to suckle her infants, and the tiger, which, in this picture, is gnawing at the wine-branch in the hand of Silenus. Here we have the representation of a brutal orgy; the idea is gross but the execution is splendid; it is an antique cameo, painted with admirable richness





THE PROCESSION OF SILENUS  
(Pinakothek, Munich)

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Of all his Processions of Silenus that in the Hermitage it is certainly the most famous. It is the smallest in size and probably also the most original, given first, with his head lying on his chest and his paunch protruding before him, in order that he might sip with the wine running out of it. He is supported by a fauness, and is being carried by a bacchantine. A satyr comes behind them, and two others are carrying a jar of the same kind. In the foreground lie two drunken female fauns, one of whom is suckling the other's infant. Near the process a tiger is rising up against the trunk of a tree and looking threateningly at the faun reclined above. The picture is entirely painted by Rubens; it is rich and soft in colour, and dates from about 1618. It appears to have formed part of the collection of the Archdukes Albert and Isabella, for Jan Brueghel included it in the gallery of these princes when he painted it in his symbolical picture of "Sight," in the Madrid Museum.

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#### THE PROCESSION OF SILENUS (Pinakothek, Munich)







and delicacy. The tonality of the picture is very warm, the colouring magnificent, with brown transparent shadows on the outlines, on which plays a ruddy light, and blueish modelling on the flesh. The brilliant light and the bright and harmonious tones ring out like a fanfare of trumpets. Philip Rubens wrote to de Piles, who had asked him the date of this picture, that it was a work of 1613; but we have many reasons for believing it later by some years. It formed part of the goods of Rubens at his death and is mentioned in the inventory as number 170; it



THE PROCESSION OF SILENUS (Museum, Berlin).

descended to the painter's nephew, Philip Rubens, who sold it to the Duke de Richelieu. The Museum at Cassel possesses a reproduction of the four principal figures, painted by a pupil and retouched by Rubens (*Œuvre*. N<sup>o</sup> 677).

The picture to be seen at Berlin is equally remarkable (*Œuvre*. N<sup>o</sup> 678). The first group, composed of a flute-player, Silenus supported by a satyr and a negro, and the drinking satyr, is the same as in the two preceding pictures; the old woman has disappeared. The last group and the drunken fauness suckling her young are replaced by other figures. Instead of them we have a nude, white Bacchante dancing, with a tambourine held above her head, and a satyr embracing her and a young fauness. Before these three figures stands a child, who is lifting his shirt and relieving himself without shame, a figure already seen in Titian's « Procession of Silenus » in the Museum at Madrid. The suckling fauness is replaced by a charming group of

children, one sitting down with grapes in his hand, another eating the fruit, and a third reaching out his hand to the grapes carried by Silenus. Here also we meet again with the tiger which, in the Munich picture, is bounding towards the wine-branch held by the demi-god.

The two new groups in the Berlin picture, different as they are in character, are both superb. Though the large Bacchante lacks relief, it is a most remarkable female figure, bold, sensual, lively without vulgarity, and with no thought beyond the delight of free and joyful life, pure in form and colour in its juvenile *abandon*. The satyr and the fauness are a merry pair; he is looking at the blonde bacchante and clasping her greedily, while the fauness nestles against him in a roguish and playful way. On the other hand, nothing could be more innocent and more graceful than the children, who are solely concerned in satisfying their greediness. The whole forms a jolly group, which takes life on its good side, delights in all material gratifications and declares that existence is short and pleasure sweet. Brilliant, intense light is lavished on it; it is brown and warm on the bronzed skins of the men, clear and blonde on that of the women. The shadows are dark grey and lightened with glowing reflections. A great part of the picture is by Rubens; the collaborator who helped him in the accessories was very probably Vandyck; Snijders painted the fruits and the tiger, and Rubens retouched them. The fauness has the features of Isabella Brant, a little exaggerated; the seated child appears in the group of Jesus and the two children in the Imperial Museum at Vienna. The babe was probably painted after Albert Rubens, when he was nearly four. The picture dates from about 1618, the period at which Rubens was fond of introducing negroes and tigers into his compositions. It was presented by the Emperor of Germany to the great Marlborough and was part of the Blenheim collection in 1885. Then it became the property of the Berlin Museum.

A « Procession of Silenus », which, judging from its figures, does not belong to the same series, is that in the National gallery of London (*Œuvre*. No 680). Instead of lumbering forward, bowed over as in the other pictures, Silenus is sinking back into the arms of a satyr, who is shouting; another satyr helps to support him, while a Bacchante pours drop by drop on his head the juice of a bunch of grapes she is squeezing between both hands; a flute-player leads the rout; a satyr caressing an old woman with a torch, and two children making eyes at the grapes in Silenus's hand come next, leading a goat, whose head is all that can be seen. The picture breathes animation and joy; the pleasure in it is a trifle less gross, less brutalized in the principal figure, which is painted with a rich brush in warm tones and bathed in a flood of abundant light. The figures are by Rubens, the fruit and the landscape by a pupil.

HISTORICAL SUBJECTS. — During this period Rubens painted hardly any historical subjects except the « Story of Decius ». All we have to mention is a series of twelve Roman emperors to be seen in the gallery of the royal palace of Berlin. The first, « Augustus », is signed *P. P. Rubens 1619*, the fifth, *G. v. H.* (Gaspar van den Hoecke) *1622* and the sixth, *A. Janson F. 1618* (*Œuvre*. No 891). These pictures evidently form a series painted in the master's studio by his pupils and disposed of by him. In the Sedelmeyer gallery we have seen a « Nero » which differed from that engraved for Rubens in the series of « Twelve busts of philosophers, generals, and emperors of Greece and Rome » (*Œuvre*. No 1219). It probably formed part of another series of Roman emperors, intended like the first to decorate a room.



The « Capture of Tunis by the Emperor Charles V » in the Museum at Berlin (*Œuvre*, N° 817) is much more interesting. It is only a half-finished sketch, but it represents all the disorder and feverish activity of a battle. We can discern a single combat between a Christian and an Arab, who is falling from his horse like the one in the « Lion-hunt », and other episodes, foot-soldiers and horsemen, and among the latter a colossal fellow, who has taken a Turk by the beard and is about to cut his throat. The emperor and Don John of Austria may be recognized in the midst of the *mêlée*. It is not known for whom, nor on what occasion, this work was undertaken ; but the resemblance of the Arab falling from his horse to a figure in the « Lion-hunt » and to the principal character in the « Conversion of St Paul » compels us to conclude that it dates from about 1618. In any case it is instructive, for here we may see how Rubens began his pictures. He prepared the ground very lightly, laid on it a few strokes in brown, and then put in some of the figures, and effects of light and colour. The first colour-effects we see marked here are the reflection of the flame on the face of the horseman who is firing a pistol into the throat of one of the enemy, a white horse and a bay horse, an Arab in red and another warrior in the same colour, who is striding over the dead bodies, sword in hand, on the left the Emperor Charles V, wearing his armour and riding a roan horse, and in the background the flames darting up from burning Tunis ; the foreground is prepared by warm tones laid on in thin layers. Rubens, therefore, used to begin by painting the whole composition, then the principal figures and the general indication of the action. He distributed the leading tones over the canvas so as to make them balance in their different relations, and was careful to put variety in the *ensemble*, in which everything remained transparent.

## PORTRAITS.

JAN-KAREL DE CORDES AND JACQUELINE VAN CAESTRE. — Some of Rubens's best known and most remarkable portraits belong to the years 1617-1621.

First of all we must mention those of Jan-Karel de Cordes and his wife Jacqueline van Caestre in the Brussels Museum (*Œuvre*, N° 920). The husband was the son of Lancelot de Renialme and Maria de Cordes, daughter of Jan, lord of la Marlière, who were married in 1574. In 1607 he was adopted by his maternal uncle Jan de Cordes, whose name he took. He was a knight decorated with the gold medal, lord of Reeth, Waerloos, Wichelen, Kerscamp and Hoybergen. He married three times ; first, Isabella van der Delft, who died in 1612 ; then, on the 3<sup>rd</sup> October, 1617, Jacqueline van Caestre, who died in 1618 ; finally Isabella de Robiano. He died on the 18<sup>th</sup> August, 1641, and was buried with his three wives at Antwerp, in the tomb of the de Cordes family in the Lady Chapel of the Cathedral. By Jacqueline van Caestre he had a son who bore his name. She probably died in child-bed, and it is certain that the portraits of the pair were painted in 1617 or 1618. The de Renialmes and de Cordes were distinguished families of the Antwerp nobility ; the portraits of the young couple, who no doubt were painted in their wedding clothes, prove them to have belonged to the wealthiest class.

Jan-Karel de Cordes (*Œuvre*, N° 920) is represented against a greyish background, which almost covers the panel. He wears a black doublet richly embroidered, over a vest

ornamented with gold embroidery; and a heavy double chain falling from his shoulders forms a knot on his chest. He wears a broadly pleated ruff. He is seen almost full-face; his complexion is pale, his hair dark auburn, nearly black, his moustache and imperial are light auburn. Health, activity and a delight in life shine all over his face, and especially in his large kindly brown eyes, which gleam with lively light. A pale ray of sunlight falls on his forehead, glides



JAN-KAREL DE CORDES (Museum, Brussels).

through his hair, and spreads a warm and velvety tint with creamy tones in the prominent parts all over the left side of his face. The right side is plunged in warm and transparent shadow, the chestnut-brown of which runs over the red. A comparison of this picture with the portrait of Rockox painted a few years before shows that the light has become intenser, the brushwork richer, the colour fatter, warmer, and more brilliant.

Jacqueline van Caestre (*Œuvre*. No 908) wears a richly embroidered robe, still richer jewels, jewelled earrings, a star-shaped hair-ornament, a necklace of white pearls, and a chain set with coloured precious stones which falls over her chest. Through the slashings of her black dress appears a lining of white figured silk. Her

pale auburn hair is wavy, and she wears it high at the back and curled above her forehead. Her complexion is pale, with a little colour on the cheeks, luminous touches on the forehead, pale blue and grey shadows on the right, and large dreamy eyes in a delicate-looking face.

The two portraits are extremely finished in execution, and are evidently show pieces intended to adorn the reception-room of the conjugal abode. But there is considerable difference between them. He is of maturer age, hard upon forty; his health is robust, his blood warm, and his temperament gay; he lives an easy-going, distinguished, but not a refined life; he is thick-set, with a short neck, and wears his gala dress with ease and elegance: he is a man of good family who has never been remarkable for anything out of the ordinary, and is more inclined to



sensual enjoyment than intellectual pleasure. His head is a very fine and sympathetic one, which Rubens idealized, purifying it by means of his art of its slight element of coarseness. She is a noble lady, still young, but already on the decline, with no health or gaiety, an anaemic person with too long a neck and too narrow a chest. All her life is housed in her great eyes, which look at you in dreamy meditation. Her dress is the richest that could be procured at a time when feminine luxury was pushed to its furthest extent; but this luxury gives her no pleasure, and life has no charm for her. Her constitution must indeed have been weak, if even Rubens's brush could not give her life and warmth.

PETER VAN HECKE AND CLARA FOURMENT.

The portraits of Peter van Hecke and his wife, Clara Fourment, Rubens's future brother and sister-in-law, belong to the same date (*Œuvre*. Nos 966, 934). This is our first meeting with a member of the Fourment family, which was to play so great a part in the life and work of Rubens. The families of Rubens, Fourment, Brant and Hecke were not only united by alliances; they were joined also by the bonds of friendship, and

there can be no doubt that they formed the circle in which our artist liked best to move. Daniel, the father of the Fourment girls, was a large silk and tapestry merchant; he was born about 1565, and married Clara Stappaerts on the 13<sup>th</sup> February, 1590, in the church of the Bourg at Antwerp. One of the witnesses was Peter van Hecke, possibly the father of Daniel Fourment's future son-in-law. Daniel Fourment died on the 5<sup>th</sup> June, 1643, in his house, called the « Golden Stag », on the Old Bourse. His eleven children, born between 1590 and 1614, were as follows, in the order of their birth: Peter Fourment, baptized on the 4<sup>th</sup> December, 1590, married Antoinette van Hecke; Daniel, the husband of Clara Brant, Rubens's sister-in-law, baptized on the 24<sup>th</sup> February, 1592; Clara, baptized on the 21<sup>st</sup> November, 1593, married Peter van Hecke; Joanna, baptized on the 24<sup>th</sup> November, 1596, married on the 9<sup>th</sup> January, 1614, to



JACQUELINE VAN CAESTRE (Museum, Brussels).



Balthasar de Groot, and died comparatively young, for her husband married again on the 1<sup>st</sup> May, 1632; Susanna, baptized on the 7<sup>th</sup> January, 1599, married on the 29<sup>th</sup> January, 1617, to Raymond Delmonte, and on the 8<sup>th</sup> March, 1622, to Arnold Lunden; she it was whom Rubens was constantly painting; Maria, baptized on the 17<sup>th</sup> June, 1601, married on the 11<sup>th</sup> February, 1618, to Hendrik Moens; Catharina, baptized on the 18<sup>th</sup> October, 1603, married on the 14<sup>th</sup> March, 1627, to Peter Hannecaert; Joannes, baptized on the 12<sup>th</sup> February, 1606, went to live in Cologne, there married and became a member of the council; Elizabeth, baptized on the 28<sup>th</sup> October 1609, married on the 23<sup>rd</sup> October, 1627, to Nicolas Piquery; Jacobus, baptized on the 25<sup>th</sup> November, 1611, and not heard of again; finally Helena Fourment, baptized on the 1<sup>st</sup> April, 1614, and married on the 6<sup>th</sup> December, 1630, to Rubens, whose brush has immortalized her (1). Daniel Fourment's seven daughters and four sons with their respective spouses were not only friends and acquaintances of Rubens; most of them were also sitters, whose portraits he painted. We know some of these pictures, but probably not all. The two mentioned above now belong to Baron Edmond de Rothschild in Paris. They may be ranked among Rubens's master-pieces. Clara Fourment is sitting in an easy chair of red velvet with wooden arms. Behind her is a column, a red drapery, a balustrade, and a corner of sky. She wears a black dress with a row of gold buttons, white cuffs, a ruff, and a necklace of pearls. Her hair is dressed high on her head, one hand rests on the arm of the chair and the other holds a fan. She is between 25 and 30, so that her portrait must have been painted about 1620. The execution is firm and quiet, the tonality warm and delicate, with slight shadows on the flesh. Peter van Hecke might be ten years older than his wife; he is represented holding his hat in one hand and leaning the other on a balustrade; his hair is short and dark auburn; he has a moustache and imperial, and wears a black silk doublet with a cloak and a ruff. A red curtain and some columns form the background. His vigorous head is thickly painted in warm tones; and so also with the ruff; the shadows are stronger than in the woman's portrait.

SUSANNA FOURMENT. — The portrait of Susanna Fourment, Clara's sister, which was painted by Rubens about the same time, in one of the master's most celebrated works. It is now in the National Gallery in London. A few years ago the name of the sitter was unknown. The picture was then called simply the « Chapeau d'Espagne » or the « Chapeau de paille »; or again « Mdlle. Lunden ». The last name was the basis of an opinion that the picture represented a daughter of Arnold Lunden, Susanna Fourment's second husband. Closer examination has enabled me to prove that Rubens had painted this young woman several times; and she appears again in a drawing in the Albertina at Vienna (*Œuvre*. N<sup>o</sup> 1506). The drawing has the note: « The sister of Heer Rubbens »; written in the same hand which has made a number of similar notes on Rubens's drawings. It could not be either of Rubens's sisters, the elder of whom, Blandina, died in 1606, and the younger, Clara, in 1580; therefore it must be a sister-in-law and a « Jufvrouw Lunden » at the same time. If we remember that in the seventeenth century married women who did not belong to the nobility were styled « jufvrouw » (Miss) and forbidden on penalty of a fine to call themselves « mevrouw » (Mrs),

(1) P. GÉNARD : *P. P. Rubens*, p. 409.

it becomes clear that « Juffvrouw Lunden » was no other than the wife of Arnold Lunden, that is to say, Susanna Fourment, who was to become Rubens's sister-in-law.

We know that he was very fond of painting her ; no fewer than seven portraits of her appear in his inventory. In the accounts of the goods of the deceased we read : « Item sold to Sr Arnold » Lunden, two portraits of his wife for the sum of one hundred and twenty florins ; but as » they belonged to the joint property they were to be charged here at one half, equals 60 fl. » These pictures, which formed part of the joint property belonged as to one half to the children of Isabella Brant, Rubens's first wife, and as to the other half to Helena Fourment, his second wife, and her children. They had been painted before the death of Isabella Brant, that is, before the 20<sup>th</sup> June, 1626.

We read again : « Item Helena Fourment has taken : a portrait of Juffrouw Lunden, at » three hundred florins, but this picture falling into the joint property, the estate takes 150 fl. »

And again : « Item allotted to Joncker Albert Rubens above mentioned : the portrait of » Juffrouw Lunden at one hundred and forty-four florins ; this picture belonging to the » joint property, one half comes to the estate, that is 72 fl. »

« Item three portraits of the same on canvas, for sixty florins ; but as they belong to the » joint property they are entered here at 30 fl. » (1).

In an inventory of the pictures belonging to the family of Arnold Lunden drawn up between 1639 and 1647 we find mention of a portrait of Susanna Rubens (read Fourment) valued at 150 florins, another at 250 florins, and a third at 120 florins. A later catalogue of the same collection mentions a portrait of the grand-mother, Susanna Fourment, valued at 150 florins, and another portrait of the same as a shepherdess, valued at 250 florins.

In the estate of Albert, Rubens's eldest son, we find « the two portraits of the mother of the deceased lady » (Albert Rubens's wife was Susanna del Monte, daughter of Raymond del Monte and Susanna Fourment) « and another portrait of the grandmother of Juffrouw Susanna del Monte ».

Rubens, therefore, had kept till his death seven portraits of Susanna Fourment, all painted before the 20<sup>th</sup> June, 1626. It may be admitted that he painted others as well, which he did not keep. What has become of these pictures ?

One we have lighted upon in the « Chapeau de paille » ; another may be found in the Louvre, under the title of « Portrait of a woman of the Boonen family » ; a third is pointed out in the *Art Union* of 1846 (p. 252) as belonging to Lord Northwick, and that is all. In the Hermitage Museum at St Petersburg, again, we find a portrait of Susanna Fourment with her daughter, Catharina Lunden ; but this picture is of later date, and cannot have been painted before 1630. A great many, therefore, of the portraits mentioned above are lost. It is impossible that they should be passing under another name : Susanna Fourment's features are, indeed, so characteristic that it is easy to distinguish them from those of any other woman.

Susanna Fourment was not a beauty, and, above all, she was not a woman whom a native of Antwerp could have styled « Rubenian ». We know her best from the Albertina drawing. She is there represented quarter-length, bareheaded, three-quarter-face, with her hair dressed

(1) P. GÉNARD : *De Nalatenschap van P. P. Rubens*. Bulletin des Archives d'Anvers, II, 87, 88.

high at the back and wearing a high bodice and a cloak with an upright collar. Her curved brow is excessively large, almost as big as the rest of her face ; and her eyes, with their clear and steady look, are very large also ; her nose, mouth, chin and ear are prettily shaped, regular and moderately small. She is thin compared with her sister Helena and the women Rubens liked to have for his models ; her cheek-bones are too prominent, but all the lower part of her face is delicate. There is a tradition that she was Rubens's mistress, and this calumny is brutally



SUSANNA FOURMENT (Louvre, Paris).

thrown in the honest woman's face in an engraved portrait, with the legend : « Miss Lunden, mistress of Rubens ». The accusation rests on nothing but Rubens's sympathy with the young woman, a sympathy we have experienced ourselves, and which may be explained by Susanna's rare intellectual faculties, to which her highly developed skull and large clear eyes bear witness ; we may suppose that Rubens took great pleasure in conversing with this intelligent and cultivated woman, and that, if there was any love between them, it was purely platonic. There were so many others whose opulent forms, satiny skins and milk-and-roses complexions he admired, that he may well have valued her for less material qualities. And if Susanna was not a beauty according to his usual ideal, she was none the less rendered extremely attractive by the fineness of her features, the brightness of her eyes, and by the delicate and transparent air of her whole face. She was his lady-love, the heroine of a little

romance, which Rubens lived in absolutely unsullied honour.

The Susanna Fourment of the National Gallery (*Œuvre*. No 949) is represented half-length, seen almost full-face, with her hands crossed on her waist ; she wears a large felt hat on one side, with the brim turned up on the left, and trimmed with large curled ostrich feathers. Her hair is a very warm auburn, and on each temple a rebellious curl has escaped from the locks taken back ; her ears have only single pearls for ornament, and she wears no jewels except a ring on one of the fingers of her right hand. Her little white stuff bodice edged with black braid is wide open in front, and reveals half her round breasts ; over it she wears a black silk or satin dress with red velvet sleeves and lace cuffs. A green gauze veil is gracefully thrown over all. In the background we see blue sky, lightly shaded with mist on the left, dark and cloudy on the right. The face is extremely fine and delicate, regular in shape, clear and warm in complexion ; the mouth is small and slightly turned up at the corners, the lips are rose-red, the brows well placed, and the eyes very large and dark grey-blue. The brim of her hat throws





SUSANNA FOURNENT (THE CHAPEAU DE PAILLE)  
(National Gallery, London)





H. v. d. Heide, Roeloffsen, Hubner & v. Santen





a light and transparent shadow over the upper part of her forehead. Her neck is slight, but soft and well-fleshed. The hands are small and delicate with long round fingers, over which the scarlet velvet sleeves throw a ruddy reflection; her shoulders are broad, and the opulent lines of her bust contrast with the slenderness of her face. The outlines are clearly drawn, and the flesh very slightly modelled. The hat, jauntily placed on one side, masks the rather uncommon size of the forehead. The whole face is full of intelligence, distinction and calm brooding; she is Rubens's Monna Lisa. Her large sweet eyes look at you, as they must have looked at Rubens, with affectionate and tranquil penetration, and the turned up corners of her mouth betray more joy in life than her Italian sister shows. The dashing look of the hat pulled over the ear, the roguish little locks curling on her temples, the indiscretion of the stomacher, and the whole attitude, declare her desire to please and her consciousness of her attractions; while her hands lying so demurely one upon another without looking for any other support, show a calm but not a timid character, a lack of expansion, and confidence in herself; she is a woman to attract you, a charming enigma to which you delight in trying to find the answer. Rubens was evidently absorbed in the contemplation of his sitter; he enjoyed analysing her, studied her poses, and made her as seductive and as *spirituelle* as possible. To no one, unless perhaps it were Helena Fourment, did he give a more elegant and more daring costume. Never did he take so much trouble to dress a sitter, so as to bring out her grace and originality so distinctly.

The paint is laid on very thin, and so clear and so lightly handled, with so little relief and impasting, that this dainty figure becomes almost vaporous and transparent. The portrait is lovingly finished; but in its delicate and almost immaterial characteristics, it is widely separated from the ordinary manner of the master; and however great may be its reputation and merit as a conception, there are others, in which the painting is thicker, which surpass it in execution.

Susanna Fourment had hardly passed her twentieth year: she was born in 1599 and was therefore painted about 1620. She certainly looks a little older, but Daniel Fourment's daughters developed early. Susanna was 18 years and 32 days old when she was first married, Maria cannot have been older, and Helena was 16 years and 9 months old when she became the wife of Rubens.

The « Chapeau de paille » (straw-hat) was probably first called the « Chapeau d'Espagne » (Spanish, that is, felt hat): the resemblance of *Spaansch*, the Flemish for *Spanish*, to *Spanen*, which means straw, procured it the name we know it by to-day.

In our opinion the National Gallery picture is no other than the portrait of Susanna Fourment, which was taken by her sister Helena out of Rubens's estate for 300 florins, which was far the highest price that had as yet been paid for one of his portraits. After the death of Helena Fourment, it passed into the Lunden family. Arnold-Albert-Joseph Lunden, who became its possessor, died on the 24<sup>th</sup> June, 1733, and left it to his heirs, together with the portrait of Isabella Brant, now at Windsor Castle, and the « Meadow at Laeken » in Buckingham Palace, London. His descendants owned it till 1817. On the 2<sup>nd</sup> November of that year it was sold to Joseph Stier d'Aertselaer. After his death it was bought on the 29<sup>th</sup> July, 1822, by Smith and Nieuwenhuys, who sold it in 1823 to Sir Robert Peel. It passed with his collection to the National Gallery.

The portrait in the Louvre (*Œuvre*. N<sup>o</sup> 950) was painted some years later: the features are thinner and sharper, the complexion less clear and now a little yellowed. The sitter is seen three-quarter face, bareheaded, with jewels in her hair and a pearl in her ear, and wearing a black satin dress embroidered in gold. In her right hand she holds a chain which falls in three turns to her waist; behind her is a red drapery, partly lifted. Her expression here is harder; the



THOMAS, EARL OF ARUNDEL  
Drawing (Count Duchastel-Dandelot, Brussels).

pointed nose, the small tightly shut mouth and the great eyes that seem to usurp the whole of her face, give her physiognomy a sharp and not altogether pleasant look; while still keeping her secret, the sphinx has lost some of her attraction. The painting is by Rubens himself, very carefully finished, and treated with a light and skilful brush, and gives a high value to the picture. In the catalogue of the Louvre it is entitled « A lady of the Boonen family » because it came from the estate of that family which was sold by auction at Brussels in 1776. It was then rightly regarded as the portrait of a relative of the lady who owned it; and, in fact, the baroness van Boonem, or rather van Boneem, was descended from Rubens through his grand-daughter, Clara Petronilla, who married don Juan, viscount d'Alvarado; their daughter, Catharina Josepha, became the wife of the nobleman van Blondel, lord of Lillers, whose daughter Catharina married the baron van Boneem in 1725. The portrait in question formed part of his estate.

The name of the baroness van Boneem was corrupted into Boonem, whence Boonen it was forgotten who the model was, and the portrait was christened by the name it now bears. It was bought at the baroness de Boneem's sale by a celebrated collector, the duke de Choiseul-Praslin, and on his death was purchased for the Louvre.

It is surprising that the model was not recognized, for its resemblance to the « Chapeau de Paille » is unmistakable; and it is no less strange that no one has noticed that the woman here represented sat for Rubens's picture of the « Education of Marie de Medici ». This picture, in which she is easily recognizable, was indeed for many years hung in the Louvre just above the portrait. Susanna sat to Rubens for one of the three Graces in this picture, and it is probable that he may have painted the portrait in question to be used a study. He contented himself with making his sister-in-law a few years younger in the large composition.

Baron Alphonse de Rothschild, of Paris, has a replica of this portrait, exactly similar to the



original, but executed with more anxious care, with more unity in the brushwork, painted very cleverly but not by the hand of Rubens.

As we have said, in 1846 a third portrait of Susanna Fourment was discovered in the collection of Lord Northwick, and perhaps is still there. It is described as follows : « The Portrait of Mdlle. Lundens, the young lady he has consigned to posterity with his own fame » in the famous « Chapeau de Paille ». There is a perfect analogy between these two pictures, » the features, disposition of the hands, and other parts being nearly similar : the lady is here » represented with a simple coiffure, decorated with a fillet of pearls. There can be no doubt of the identity of person ; and, without instituting any comparison with the grand *chef d'œuvre* in the Gallery of Sir R. Peel, we can say that the picture we are describing, possesses all the » usual glow and facility of the great painter's pencil. (1) »

THOMAS OF ARUNDEL. - Rubens also painted at this period a certain number of celebrated contemporaries. Thus he made several portraits of Thomas of Arundel. Thomas Howard, Earl of Arundel, was the most famous amateur of art in England. He began about 1615 to collect works of painting and sculpture ; in October, 1616, king James I presented him with the art treasures of his favourite, the Duke of Somerset, who had fallen into disgrace. He enriched this collection with antiquities and works of art which he had bought for him all over Europe. Several English envoys or *chargés d'affaires* were in his service and helped him in making his acquisitions. He sent William Petty to Greece, and Petty brought him back thence a number of ancient statues and inscriptions, among others the famous slab of Parian marble, on which were inscribed the principal parts of Greek history. This part of his collection, known as the Arundel marbles, passed later to the University of Oxford, which still possesses them. He bought not only ancient marbles, but also Italian and Flemish pictures, medals and engraved stones. His collection, which was arranged in his London house and his garden in Lambeth, comprised 37 statues, 128 busts, 250 marbles with inscriptions, besides tombs, altars and engraved stones.

We have little or no information on the visit of Lord Arundel to the continent at the time when Rubens painted his portrait. It seems, however, to follow from a letter written by Carleton to the Earl on the 22<sup>nd</sup> June, 1621, that the latter had been at Antwerp shortly before that date. The letter begins thus : « Paying the other day my respects to the king and queen of » Bohemia at Amsterdam, I saw there the picture by Holbein which you desired to possess, » but at this moment it is not possible to obtain it, although I have begun negotiations which » I certainly intend to renew ». Arundel, therefore, had seen this picture at Amsterdam, and consequently he had been in Holland, and probably also at Antwerp.

A letter written to Arundel from one of his agents at Antwerp on the 17<sup>th</sup> July, 1620, enables us to settle the date at which this family portrait was painted. It says : Immediately on my arrival in this city, I presented your Lordship's letter to Signor Rubens, the painter, who received and perused it with evident marks of satisfaction. I give you his reply : « Although », said he, « I have refused to execute the portraits of many princes and noblemen, especially of

(1) *Art Union*, 1846, p. 252.

» his Lordship's rank, yet, from the Earl I am bound to receive the honour which he does me  
» in commanding my services, regarding him as I do, in the light of an evangelist to the world  
» of art, and the great supporter of our profession » ; and with other expressions of courtesy, he proceeded to make arrangements for her Ladyship's sitting to him on the following morning.



THE EARL AND COUNTESS OF ARUNDEL (Pinakothek, Munich).

He has already sketched her likeness with Robin the dwarf, the fool and the dog. The sketch, however, still requires some trifling additions, which he will make to-morrow ; and on the following day, her Ladyship starts, with the intention of sleeping to Brussels. It so happened that, when Rubens began his work, he was unable to lay his hand on a piece of canvas sufficiently large for his purpose. Having drawn the heads, therefore, as they should be, he sketched the postures and draperies of the figures on paper, and finished a separate drawing of the dog ;



Drawing (Albertina, Vienna)  
SUSANNA POURMENT











but he has ordered a canvas of the proper size to be prepared, and will himself copy what he has done, and send the copy with the original sketches to your Lordship (1).

At that moment, therefore, Arundel was not in the Netherlands. As we have seen, he probably came there in the following year. Rubens then added the portrait of the Earl on the same canvas on which he had painted the Countess and her jester, her dwarf and her dog. The husband occupies a very secondary place in this great canvas, and we may regard it as certain that at first he was not intended to appear in it at all. He was only added to the group after it had already been finished according to the original plan.

The picture is now in the Pinakothek at Munich (*Œuvre*. No 888). The countess is sitting in an arm-chair in front of her house, under a gallery supported by twisted columns. She is dressed in black, and her delicate hand lies on the head of a white greyhound with black spots.

The Earl is standing behind her; he wears a brown doublet, grey hose and a lace collar. In front of him, on the extreme right of the picture, is Robin, the countess's dwarf, in a costume of red velvè embroidered in gold; he has a falcon on his hand. On the left, behind the dog, stands the jester, dressed in yellow and green; he is holding up the drapery that hangs between the columns and displays the Arundel coat. The ground is covered by a rich Turkey carpet. The figures are full-length and life-sized. This is the largest and most important of the portraits of groups painted by the master, but not the finest. The colour is very bright, but the bare head and neck of the countess hardly stand out at all; the Earl appears to be simply sketched in, in a grey and dull tonality. The two secondary figures, on the other hand, are richly clad; the dog and the dwarf especially are remarkable. A bright light falls on the foreground and the draperies are fine in colour. The figures are by the master's hand; the accessories, the dog, the falcon and the draperies are painted by pupils, but retouched by Rubens.

There is a portrait of Thomas of Arundel seen three-quarter-face, at Castle Howard (*Œuvre*. No 889), the country seat of the earl of Arundel, which now belongs to the earl of Carlisle. His hair and beard are rough; he is enveloped in a furred mantle and wears on his chest a medal hung on a ribbon. Waagen states that this portrait is one of the finest ever painted by Rubens.

A superb drawing in red and black chalk, which was used as a study for this portrait, is in the collection of Count Duchastel-Dandelot at Brussels (*Œuvre*. No 1497).

At Warwick Castle, the seat of the earl of that name, there used to be a portrait representing the earl of Arundel, wearing gleaming armour with a blue scarf thrown over it. Round his neck is a medal hung on a chain; his right hand rests on a stick, his left upon his thigh, and his helmet lies on the table behind him. He looks about fifty. Waagen and Burger both consider this portrait a master-piece. It was recently sold to Mrs Garner of Boston.

Smith mentions another portrait of the earl of Arundel by Rubens, in the Argyll collection. There was one, also, in Rubens's estate: this perhaps was one of the last two.

I have not had the opportunity of seeing the portraits of the earl of Arundel by Rubens in the castles of England, and so cannot decide if they were painted in 1620, or in 1629, when Rubens met Arundel again in England. It seems to me, however, that the portrait in armour

(1) Translated from the Italian original at Norfolk House, no 76 (WILLIAM HOOKHAM CARPENTER: *Historical notices consisting of a Memoir of Sir Anthony Van Dyck, etc.* London, 1844).

must have been painted at the latter date, for it is difficult to believe that the earl took his armour with him when he travelled.

CHARLES DE LONGUEVAL. — A year after painting the large portrait of Arundel, Rubens painted that of Charles de Longueval, count de Busquoy or Bucquoi (*Œuvre*. No 979). He was a very famous general. Born at Arras in 1571, he had first of all commanded the field artillery



CHARLES DE LONGUEVAL, Count de Busquoy (Hermitage, St Petersburg).

in the service of Spain ; later, from 1618 till his death, he was a general in the service of Austria. He died on the 3<sup>rd</sup> July, 1621, under the walls of Neuhausel, in a sortie during the siege of that town. We have a letter of the 19<sup>th</sup> August, 1621, in which Robert Schilders of Cambrai informs Peiresc that Rubens had been commissioned to make an allegorical design, to be engraved on copper with the portrait and praises of the deceased. The portrait, as a matter of fact, was painted in oils with a frame-work in grisaille. The work is in the Hermitage at St Petersburg. No doubt it was executed immediately after Longueval's death, as Schilders states. Rubens made the portrait after a drawing by Vorsterman, which is now

in the British Museum. Vorsterman engraved it in 1621 or 1622, while he was still working for Rubens.

As Rubens's work was meant to be engraved as an act of homage to the general, he gave more importance to the surrounding frame than to the execution of the portrait. The allegorical framework is extremely rich, and presents us with a remarkable specimen of what Rubens could do in this style. The count is bareheaded, wearing his armour, with his hand resting on his commander's staff, and is surrounded by a garland of oak and laurel leaves. Beyond this garland we see on the right Hercules leaning on his club, crushing Envy, and trampling Discord under his feet. Above rise Concord and Bellona, offering a terrestrial globe and a palm to the



imperial eagle. Security stands by the side of the portrait, holding a trophy of arms; the eagle that surmounts the portrait with wings spread, is being crowned by the Church and Religion. Below are fettered figures of towns and rivers. The inscription, which gives the name and titles of the deceased, is placed on a slab supported by sitting lions with a festoon of fruits in their jaws, and lighted reversed torches between them. We might go on to mention other details, without being certain of having grasped all the allegories that Rubens has put into the innumerable accessories. He is really admirable in these *jeux d'esprit*, in which he displays inexhaustible invention and a prodigious knowledge of composition, that results in the combination of them into a decorative and harmonious whole.

As a pendant to this portrait with its rich framework, we might quote that of Olivarez, which is much more sober, and that of the Archduchess Isabella, which is still less ornate. These large plates, like the more simply framed copper-plate engravings representing Philip II and Elizabeth de Bourbon, were not intended solely for the collectors of prints, but were also meant to be framed and hung up to decorate the rooms of the middle classes.



Dr THEODOOR VAN THULDEN  
(Pinakothek, Munich).

Dr VAN THULDEN. —

The portrait of Theodoor

van Thulden, in the Pinakothek, occupies the front rank of the portraits of this period, and even of all Rubens's portraits. Theodoor van Thulden was born at Bois-le-duc, studied law under Erycius Puteanus at Louvain and proceeded to the degree of doctor in 1615, after which he returned to his native town. Soon afterwards he became professor of law at Louvain, and published his first book in 1620, entitled *Dissertationes Socraticæ* and treating of moral and political science. Between that year and 1633, he published a number of other works on law. In 1645, he was summoned to Mechlin as a member of the supreme council; but he only fulfilled his functions for four months, and died on the 19<sup>th</sup> November of the same year. Rubens painted him, like Peckius, with his right hand resting on the arm of his chair and his left



holding a book. His hair is brown, his moustache and imperial fair; his cheeks glow with health and his nose is a little red; his expression reveals a serene mind and a firm character. He wears a black robe with grey reflections, and a dazzlingly white neck-band, and is wrapped in the folds of his professorial gown, with its turned-up collar. The solidity with which the model is seated and posed; the naturalness of his attitude, and the breadth and softness of the painting are admirable; the flesh is transparent with freshness and health; cool grey shadows stretch across his face; the hollows of his eyes and nostrils are touched in with red in order to accentuate the impression of youthful and strong vitality; he is entirely impregnated with a

light that appears to spring from within, rather than to be reflected by his exterior features.

The picture must have been painted about 1620, at the beginning of van Thulden's residence in Louvain. It is markedly different from that painted by Vandyck and engraved in his *Iconography*. In the latter van Thulden appears with drawn features, dilated eyes, a fixed gaze, rough hair, and a broad flat nose. The face of this haggard person with the feverish expression is in more than one point the antithesis of the calm face of beaming health, lit by firm and serene eyes, of the van Thulden at Munich. We know that Vandyck used to give his fancy play in his portraits, and probably he painted the doctor some years later; but it is permissible to doubt the identity of the sitter.

We may mention, in connection with this subject, that the old church of St George,



THE WOMAN WITH CURLY HAIR (Museum, Dresden).

at Antwerp, had a portrait painted by Rubens, representing Hendrik van Thulden, vicar of the church, who was born at Bois-le-duc and died at Antwerp in 1617 at the age of 37 (*Œuvre*. N<sup>o</sup> 1072). According to Mols, he was the brother of the painter Theodoor van Thulden. The picture used to adorn the tomb of the vicar, and disappeared at the time of the French Revolution, leaving no traces.

Among the portraits painted at this time we must include also that of the famous physician and alchemist, Theophrastus Paracelsus Bombastes, who lived from 1493 to 1541 (*Œuvre*. N<sup>o</sup> 1016). Rubens painted him half-length, with his hands at the bottom of the panel; in one he holds a book. In the background is a landscape. The picture dates from between 1615 and 1618, and till 1886 it formed part of the duke of Marlborough's collection at Blenheim; afterwards it belonged to the Kums collection at Antwerp. At the sale of this collection in 1898

it was bought for the Royal Museum at Brussels. It was painted after an old picture attributed to Albert Dürer.

In Rubens's estate there appeared two portraits of Susanna Haecx, wife of Jan Janssens, receiver of the town of Antwerp, who bought the two pictures from the heirs for 180 florins (*Œuvre*. Nos 964, 965). One half of their value belonged to the children of Rubens's first marriage, and they were painted, therefore, before the death of Isabella Brant. Susanna Haecx must have been the sister-in-law of Gaspar Gevartius, Rubens's friend, who had also married a lady of the name of Haecx. Susanna was married on the 14<sup>th</sup> May, 1619. We do not know why Rubens painted her more than once, nor why he kept the two pictures in his own hands. We are equally ignorant of the fate of these portraits. Susanna Haecx may possibly have been the young blonde woman with curly hair whom Rubens painted several times, and whose portrait occurs in the Duke of Arenberg's gallery at Brussels (*Œuvre*. No 1088), in the Dresden Museum (*Œuvre*. No 1097), and a third time in a picture we have discovered in a private collection; not to mention the copies in the Cassel Museum and the Hermitage at St Petersburg.

#### DRAWINGS FOR THE PRINTERS

In spite of the prodigious quantity of pictures of all kinds which Rubens produced between 1617 and 1621, he still found time to make a number of drawings. Without discussing those which he made merely as studies for his compositions, we will confine ourselves to saying a few words (for longer explanations would lead us too far) about the drawings he made for the frontispieces of books. He supplied several printers with them. The year 1617 was specially prolific in compositions of this kind. To that year belong the title-pages, engraved by an artist unknown in the manner of Jan Collaert, for *la Magdeleine* by F. Rémi de Beauvais, Capuchin in the province of the Netherlands, 8<sup>o</sup>, printed at Tournai by Charles Martin (*Œuvre*. No 1242); that of the *Biblia sacra cum glossa ordinaria*, fol., printed at Douai by Balthasar Bellerus, engraved by Jan Collaert (*Œuvre*. No 1244); for the *Numismata imperatorum romanorum aurea a C. Julio Cæsare usque ad Valentinianum* by Jacob De Bie (Jacobus Biaeus) fol., printed by Hieronymus Verdussen and engraved by Michel Lasne (*Œuvre*. No 1270): for the *'t Vaders Boeck* by Heribertus Rosweyde fol., which appeared in 1617 from the same publisher (*Œuvre*. No 1296); for the *Crux triumphans et gloriosa* by Jacob Bosius, fol., printed by Balthasar and Jan Moretus, engraved by Cornelis Galle, the elder (*Œuvre*. No 1248); and that of the *De Justitia et Jure cæterisque Virtutibus Cardinalibus* by Leonardus Lessius, fol. engraved by the same engravers for the same publishers (*Œuvre*. No 1279).

In 1618 Jacob De Bie published a new volume of his numismatics, *Graeciae Universae Asiaeque minoris et insularum numismata*, for which Michel Lasne also engraved the title-page after a drawing by Rubens (*Œuvre*. No 1271).

In 1620, we find three frontispieces drawn by him. That of the *De Contemplatione divina* by F. Thomas a Jesu, 8<sup>o</sup> (*Œuvre*. No 1308); that of the *Annales Sacri* by Augustin Tornielus (*Œuvre*. No 1309) both engraved by Theodoor Galle for the publishers, Balthasar Moretus and the widow of Jan Moretus; and finally that of the *Gelrische Rechten des Ruremundtschen Quartiers* (*Œuvre*. No 1268) published by order of the Estates of Guelderland by Jan Hompes at Roermond, for which the Estates ordered the drawing of Rubens and the engraving of Jan Collaert.

## RUBENS'S COLLABORATORS BETWEEN 1617 AND 1621.

We have more than once had occasion to remark that during this period Rubens made use of the assistance of collaborators in his most important pictures. At this time he was the painter whose renown exceeded that of all, who was sought by the young men as their master and imitated even by the old. We have scarcely any information about the pupils he took at this date. Very few of them are known to us with any certainty. Those who did not succeed in making a reputation, and they were the greater number, have remained unknown.

ANTONY VANDYCK. — Properly speaking, Antony Vandyck is the only one of Rubens's pupils on whose collaboration we are well informed; he was also the most distinguished, and



ANTONY VANDYCK (After an engraving by himself).

the one who enjoyed the most interesting relations with his master. He was born at Antwerp of parents in easy circumstances on the 22<sup>nd</sup> March, 1599. His innate leaning towards art was manifested by a rare precocity. He was only ten years old when Balthazar van Balen the elder took him as a pupil. In 1618 he was admitted master in the guild of St Luke. In the same year we find him working in Rubens's studio, and painting important pictures after his master's drawings. We do not know when he entered the studio. It is certain that it was some time before 1618, for by that time he was not only a talented painter, but completely impregnated with the style and spirit of Rubens.

On the 28<sup>th</sup> April, 1618, when the master offered Dudley Carleton twelve of his pictures in exchange for his antique marbles, among the number there was an « Achilles among the daughters of Lycomedes », which he stated was painted by the best of his pupils, evidently Vandyck. On the following 12<sup>th</sup> May, Rubens wrote to Carleton that he had made the cartoons for the tapestries of the « Story of Decius », which were to be woven at Brussels. We have seen what a considerable part Vandyck took in the work. In 1618, therefore, he was Rubens's best pupil, and employed by him on his most important works. So it remained until Vandyck's departure for London in 1621.

On the 29<sup>th</sup> March, 1620, Rubens and Jacob Tirinus, superior of the professed house of the Jesuits in Antwerp, signed the agreement relating to the 39 ceilings for their new church; and therein it is expressly stipulated that Rubens himself should draw all the designs for the pictures, and that they should be executed on the full scale by Antony Vandyck and some others of his pupils. It is further agreed that at some opportune time Vandyck shall be commissioned for a picture for one of the side altars. This picture was never painted. The pictures by Rubens in which we can prove the collaboration of Vandyck were these: the « Calvary » in the Antwerp Museum; the « Miracles of St Ignatius and St François Xavier » at



Vienna; the « Assumption of the Virgin » in the Düsseldorf Museum; the « Meeting of Esau and Jacob » at Munich; the « Rape of the daughters of Leucippus by Castor and Pollux », and the « Lion-hunt » in the Munich Pinakothek; the « Procession of Silenus » at Berlin, the « Virgin and Repentant Sinners » at Cassel, and « Lot leaving Sodom », formerly in the Marlborough collection at Blenheim. There is no doubt that he worked on many other pictures during the three years of his collaboration with Rubens.

He helped the master also in another way. « Rubens was very fortunate », says Bellori, « in having discovered a pupil to his mind, who was capable of drawing his pictures for the » use of the engravers, as he did in the case of the « Battle of the Amazons ». He rendered » him no less service in painting. The master, in fact, being unable to fulfil the great number » of commissions he received, employed his pupil to transfer his compositions to the canvas » and to carry out in paint his drawings and sketches. It is said that Rubens made quite a » hundred florins a day, thanks to the facility in working given him by Vandyck's assistance, » while Vandyck derived a still greater profit from the lessons of an unrivalled master in his art ».

Thus, according to Bellori's statement, it was Vandyck who made the drawings intended for the engravers, who reproduced the master's pictures, and more than one fact helps to confirm the assertion. As we shall soon learn, the master was in the habit of setting the engravers to work, not after his pictures, but after grisailles which he painted himself, or entrusted his pupils to carry out for him, or again after drawings made by his pupils or by the engravers themselves into which he often introduced alterations. The National Gallery in London possesses one of these grisailles, representing the « Miraculous Draught of Fishes »; it differs widely from the composition of the picture, and was very probably drawn for the engraver by Vandyck under Rubens's direction. There are a large number of superb chalk-drawings, made by the pupil after his master's pictures, for use as models for the engravers, and dating from the years 1618, 1619 and 1620.

We know from other evidence that Rubens employed the assistance not only of Vandyck but of his other pupils; sometimes they copied pictures, sometimes they painted compositions to their full size after his sketches, sometimes they themselves prepared subjects and carried the execution of them as far as possible, leaving the master the task of putting the finishing touches. On this point we have the statement of a witness who says that he saw the pupils at work about the time when Vandyck was working with Rubens. Otho Sperling, who was afterwards physician to the king of Denmark, was born at Hamburg in 1602. He began his studies at Greifswald and went to continue them at Leyden in 1619. There he remained two years, and then returned home, passing on his way through Antwerp. He met Hugo Grotius and paid a visit to Rubens. Grotius had escaped from the prison of Loëvestein on the 22<sup>nd</sup> March, 1621, and arrived in Antwerp on the following day; he stayed there a short time and soon started again for Paris. It was in the first half of 1621, therefore, that Otho Sperling reached Antwerp. He related his visit to Rubens as follows: « He visited the celebrated » painter Rubens, and found the great artist at work. While still painting, he was having » Tacitus read aloud to him, and was dictating a letter. When we kept silence so as not to » disturb him with our talk, he himself began to talk to us, while still continuing to work, to » listen to the reading and to dictate his letter, answering our questions and thus displaying

» his astonishing powers. After that he told off one of his servants to show us over every part » of his splendid house, in which we were shown the Greek and Roman antiquities, which he » possessed in great quantity. We saw there also a large hall which had no windows but was » lighted through an opening in the ceiling. In this hall were a number of young painters ; all » at work on different pictures, for which Rubens had made the drawings in chalks, indicating » the tones here and there which Rubens would afterwards finish himself. The work would then » pass for a Rubens, and thus it was that he amassed an unheard-of fortune, and was loaded » with presents and jewels by princes and kings. About this time a new church for the Jesuits » was being built in Antwerp, and for this he executed innumerable paintings, some intended » to cover the ceilings, others to adorn the walls and the altars, which brought him in » considerable sums. When we had seen everything, we returned to him, thanked him politely, » and took our leave » (1). It is hardly necessary to remark that this picture of Rubens's house and his manner of working is not drawn from life. The ostentation of the great artist in painting while he listened to a reading, dictated a letter and maintained a conversation, is a little bit of romance intended to be effective, put into circulation during his life, and reproduced by the author of these reminiscences because it read well. But the way in which the pupils were at work after Rubens's drawings and sketches is related in a striking manner and agrees with known facts, whether the traveller were an eye-witness of what he relates, or whether he is merely reporting what he had heard.

During the years Vandyck spent with Rubens, he painted a number of pictures on his own account, which recall more or less the master's manner, but none the less reveal an original and uncommon ability. The earliest is the « Christ bearing the Cross » in the church of the Dominicans, now St Paul's, at Antwerp. Bellori states that Vandyck painted this picture immediately after leaving Rubens's school. That probably means immediately after he had ceased to be Rubens's pupil, but before he became a master himself, that is to say in 1617 or 1618. The fifteen Mysteries of the Rosary, of which the « Christ bearing the Cross » is one, appear, in fact, to date from the first of these two years. The pictures painted by Vandyck, while he was Rubens's pupil, would, no doubt, include all those which were kept by the master and appear in the inventory of his estate, which were : a « Portrait of Charles V after Titian », the « Story of Antiope and Jupiter metamorphosed into a Satyr », a « St Jerome with an angel », a large « St Jerome », a small « St Jerome », a « Betrayal of Our Lord », a « St Ambrose », a « St Martin », a « Coronation of Christ », a « Head of St George », painted on wood, and a head of a « Man in Armour », also on wood. To the same period belong the « Crucifixion of St Peter » in the Brussels Museum, the « Brazen Serpent » in the Madrid Museum, the « Procession of drunken Silenus », « St John the Baptist », and « St John the Evangelist », all three in the Berlin Museum. He also painted a series of the « Apostles with Christ » as we learn from a lawsuit concerning the authenticity of the work.

It is certain that Vandyck began early to paint portraits, even before 1620. Mols states that he had seen two portraits, afterwards sent to Poland, which had the inscription : « Painted in 1618 by me, Antony Vandyck, then aged 19 years ». The Museum at Brussels has a portrait

(1) *Repertorium für Kunstwissenschaft*, X, p. 111.

dated 1619, representing, possibly, Frans Snijders, and attributed to Rubens, but really the work of Vandyck. Numerous other portraits, among which is included one of himself, belong to the same period. In the Museum at Dresden and the Liechtenstein collection several portraits may be met with which are sometimes attributed to Vandyck and sometimes to Rubens. There was so much resemblance between the first manner of the young and talented pupil and that of his master, that it is difficult to distinguish one's pictures from the other's. Thus several, which have been or still are ascribed to Rubens really belong to Vandyck (1). We have already mentioned the « Brazen Serpent » at Madrid, and the « St Martin » at Windsor; to these we will add the « Christ mourned by the Holy Women » in the Liechtenstein Gallery.

The influence of Rubens is very plain in all these pictures. The « Christ bearing the Cross » in the Dominican church at Antwerp is the earliest of the works of this series, and consequently the one that shows the least maturity. The « Crucifixion of St Peter », in the Brussels Museum, is also one of the feebler paintings of these early years. The other pictures painted by Vandyck at this period are very much better. Some are distinguished by a strong exaggeration of Rubens's manner. Others almost equal the master's work, like the « Brazen



ST. MARTIN, BY ANTONY VANDYCK (Church of Saventhem).

Serpent » and the « St Jerome ». The first a little resembles the « Betrayal of Christ » in its dark tonality; the second is less sombre, but harder and dryer; the third is still a little dry in painting, but at once so healthy and refined in execution, that a master is already visible in the pupil. The most perfect work of this period is the « Christ crowned and mocked » in the Berlin Museum, of which the Madrid Museum has a copy with modifications: it is fully

(1) Among these portraits of doubtful authenticity may be mentioned, in the Dresden Museum: N° 1023A (formerly 959) portrait of a man with moustache and imperial; N° 960, a man with his hand on his hip, standing by a table; N° 1023D (formerly 961) a woman with a gold chain round her neck; N° 1023B (968) a woman (Maria Clarisse) with a child on her knees, and 1023C (966) a man wrongly termed Jan van den Wouwer. All these portraits were formerly attributed to Rubens: Bode held them to be Vandycks, and we agree with him, except in the case of N° 960, which in our opinion is a Rubens. N° 1023D remains doubtful, though a recent study we have made of it inclines us to attribute it to Vandyck. The doubtful portraits in the Liechtenstein Gallery are Nos 70-71, Old man and woman, dating from 1618, and N° 95, man with his hand on a chair. In the last catalogue but one (1873) these three portraits were attributed to Vandyck; in the new catalogue they appear under the name of Rubens. Bode restores them to Vandyck, Emile Michel believes them to be Rubensés, and I share his opinion.



worthy of Rubens in the firmness of its composition, the vigour of its colour and light, and its execution in general.

It must be noted that in none of these pictures has Vandyck used the manner which Rubens had adopted at this period. Thus, for example, we do not find in them the clearness nor the brilliance of colouring of the Antwerp « Calvary » or one of the first « Assumptions of Our Lady », although he collaborated on these works. He wished to employ in his own creations more vigorous colour and more energetic and dashing action than the less robust manner of Rubens at this time made use of. Vandyck's painting, therefore, was darker, warmer and freer, like his master's about 1610. His « St Jerome » at Dresden hangs side by side with the picture of the same subject which Rubens painted in Italy. The pupil's work bears an obvious resemblance to that of his illustrious predecessor, which was painted ten years earlier; but there is something rougher and darker about it, and it is very different in general from the master's works of 1618-1620.

It has been claimed that Rubens modified his manner according to his pupil's, and that after 1620 he began to paint in a way that resembled that already adopted by Vandyck. The assertion rests on no proof, and is in contradiction to known facts. Vandyck's manner before 1620 resembled that of his master in 1610. After 1620 Rubens's painting continued its regular evolution, as it had before that year. His « History of Marie de Medici », the great work he executed at that period, has no trace of the manner of Vandyck. It is true, that after 1624 his painting became broader and freer, but it had no resemblance to the heavy, massive, cold manner of the young Vandyck, and was lighter and more luminous, more varied in tonality and freer in drawing, points which we do not meet with in his pupil. Vandyck modified his manner several times; but the element that increased with him was his calm and delicacy: he goes further and further away from the vigour, the strong colour and the brilliance of his master. If we are able to discover so close a resemblance between the works of the two up till 1620 as sometimes even to confuse one with the other, after that date their paths become more and more divergent, and their works offer a striking contrast. All the facts mentioned above prove that Rubens set great store by Vandyck. The master painted the portrait of his best pupil; it was found unfinished among his goods, and had been painted before 1626 and consequently before the young artist's departure for Italy. The same portrait, or a copy, formed part of the collection of Charles II and James II of England.

Vandyck worked under Rubens till 1620. Several English amateurs of art then formed a desire to induce him to go to England. Thomas, Earl of Arundel, the well-known patron, enquired into the possibility of persuading him to expatriate himself thus. A confidential emissary wrote to him on the subject on the 17<sup>th</sup> July, 1620, as follows: « Vandyck still stays with Rubens, and his works begin to be valued as highly as his master's. He is a young man of twenty-one years, whose parents belong to the well-to-do classes of this town, so that it will be very difficult to persuade him to move, especially since he sees the riches Rubens is daily amassing ». Vandyck therefore was spending his life with Rubens, whether he lived in his house or worked all day in his studio; though he was only twenty-one, his pictures were almost as highly prized as his master's. This last statement is confirmed by all we know of the illustrious pupil. We will note in passing that whenever we meet with a

statement about Vandyck's relations with his master, the question of money is touched upon. Bellori says that the pupil's work brought the master a good 100 florins a day ; Otho Sperling declares that Rubens had amassed considerable wealth, thanks to Vandyck's work, and here we have the large fortune acquired by Rubens put forward as the principal reason that would prevent his pupil from leaving Antwerp. Rubens's success and wealth were, therefore, universally notorious.

In spite of the forecast of Lord Arundel's correspondent, Vandyck did not long resist the solicitations from England. On the 25<sup>th</sup> November, 1620, Tobie Matthew, Sir Dudley Carleton's confidential agent, wrote to his employer : « Your L<sup>d</sup> will have heard how Van Dike his famous » Allieno (*read* Alievo=pupil) is gone into England, and y<sup>t</sup> the Kinge hath given him a » Pension of £100 p<sup>r</sup> ann. » (1) The bait was no doubt alluring, and we can understand that the young artist complied with the royal wishes. On this occasion he did not stay long in London. On the 26<sup>th</sup> February, 1621, he received a sum of £100 sterling, amounting to a year's salary, « by way of reward for speciall services by him pformed for his M<sup>tie</sup> (James I) » (2) and on the 28<sup>th</sup> of the same month a passport was made out « to Antony Vandyck gent, his » Maties Servaunt to travaile for 8 Months, he having obtained his Maties leave in that behalf as » was sygnified by the E of Arundell » (3). We may easily imagine what the « services » were, which Vandyck rendered to king James I from November, 1620, to February, 1621. Probably he painted the portraits of the royal family and the principal courtiers, though we are unable to say exactly whom. The eight months' leave he obtained from king James on the 28<sup>th</sup> February, 1621, were destined to run into eleven years ; he only returned to London in 1632.

Vandyck probably returned in 1621 to Antwerp, for in that year he painted the portrait of Nicolas Rockox, and when his father died on the 13<sup>th</sup> December, 1622, he was there to close his eyes. In 1623 he went to Italy, and remained there till 1626 or 1627. About the 1<sup>st</sup> April, 1632, he went for the second time to London, where he stayed till his death, returning to the continent only once or twice for short visits.

After his first departure for England there was no more collaboration or intimate relations between him and Rubens : they remained friends, however, for after his return Vandyck painted Rubens's portrait again, for an engraving on copper. He played no further part in his master's life, and is of no interest to his biography after 1620.

CORNELIS SCHUT. — The second pupil of mark, whom Rubens took into his studio was Cornelis Schut, who was baptized in the Cathedral at Antwerp on the 13<sup>th</sup> May, 1597. In 1618 or 1619 he was admitted master in the Guild of St Luke. The registers of the Guild do not mention him for sixteen years : then, in the year 1633-1634, he took a pupil. We have seen that Vandyck, although he had proceeded master, continued to work in Rubens's studio ; the case was probably the same with Schut. We have no positive proof that he was ever apprenticed to Rubens, not that he collaborated in any particular pictures. Tradition alone is

(1) NOEL SAINSBURY : *Papers relating to Rubens*, p. 54.

(2) HOOKHAM CARPENTER : *Op. cit.* p. 9.

(3) *Ibid.* p. 10.

our authority for the statement that he was one of the master's pupils, and his works clearly prove that he belonged to the school of Rubens. But Schut no more adopted the heroic manner of the great painter without subjecting it to modification than Vandyck did after his return from Italy; in drawing and colour he had a leaning towards the pretty and mawkish, and this tendency was not compensated for by the profundity and delicacy of sentiment which give a personal and very lofty originality to the most distinguished of his fellow-pupils. Taking into consideration the years in which Schut must have worked under Rubens and the characteristics which distinguish certain pictures of 1617-1621 in the parts due to collaborators, we believe we may recognize his hand in the « Assumption of the Virgin » painted for the Reformed Carmelites of Brussels and now in the Museum there; in the « St Dominic and St Francis of Assisi interceding for the world », painted for the Dominican church at Antwerp, now in the Lyons Museum, and in the « Martyrdom of St Stephen » in the Museum at Valenciennes. The first occasion on which we learn anything definite about Schut's collaboration with Rubens is in 1634-1635, when the master was commissioned to paint the triumphal arches for the state entry of the Cardinal-Infant Ferdinand, and engaged a whole legion of Antwerp painters to help him in the enormous undertaking. Cornelis Schut's task was to paint a picture for the « Welcome Theatre », raised near St George's church, comprising three large historical pictures and two allegorical panels. He painted, after a sketch by Rubens, the central picture, the « Arrival of the prince in the Netherlands ». Jordaens retouched the work, which was presented to the Cardinal-Infant.

PETER VAN MOL. — Another painter mentioned among Rubens's pupils is Peter van Mol, born at Antwerp and baptized on the 17<sup>th</sup> November, 1599. In 1611 he was apprenticed to an entirely unknown painter, Zeger van den Grave; in 1622-1623 he became a master in the Guild of St Luke. From 1631, he was settled in Paris; in 1642 he bore the title of painter-in-ordinary to the queen; in 1648 he was made a member of the Academy of Fine Arts of France, and died at Paris in the 8<sup>th</sup> April, 1650. The productions of his, which are known to us, are in the manner of Rubens, but nerveless and insignificant. There is no positive proof that he ever collaborated with the master. The date at which he began to practise the art, however, makes it probable that he did, and his painting confirms the fact rather than contradicts it.

PETER SOUTMAN. — Philip Rubens, in his life of his uncle, and Cornelis De Bie both state that Peter Soutman was a pupil of Rubens. Here no doubt is possible. Soutman was born at Haarlem in 1580 or thereabouts, and became a citizen of Antwerp on the 18<sup>th</sup> September, 1620. A few years later he left Antwerp for the court of the king of Poland, who had appointed him his court-painter. He returned to his native town in 1630 and married there. He died on the 16<sup>th</sup> August, 1657. He entered the master's service and worked under him chiefly as an engraver, and in this quality we shall soon have to consider him at greater length. It may be admitted that he collaborated with Rubens in his pictures, but we are unable to point to any work in which his collaboration is evident. Soutman was a painter of little worth; though he adopted the methods of the school of Rubens and followed them even after his return to his native place, his work is almost valueless. His fidelity in following his master's manner,



together with his own feebleness, is evident in a picture he painted for the state-hall of the Huis-ten-Bosch at the Hague. He was then working with Jacob Jordaens and the disciples of Rubens who were settled in Holland about 1652 : van Thulden, De Grebber, and Lievens, and he painted a panel representing the « Riches of Brazil ».

To sum up, the pupils of Rubens we can name at this period form a very meagre group ; we have a conviction, indeed an absolute certainty, that there were a very large number of others who worked in his studio and collaborated in his pictures ; but we have no data to enable us to give their names precisely, and even if we knew them, they would be void of all meaning for us, as in the case of those of several painters, of whom we happen to know that they worked under Rubens without knowing a single other detail.

### RUBENS'S ENGRAVERS (1)

THE GALLES. — We have already had occasion to speak of the drawings made by Rubens for the engravers, and engraved by them for book-illustrations. We have seen that he sent home from Italy drawings he had made after antique statues and bas-reliefs. These drawings were published in a work issued from the Plantin press in 1608, while Rubens was still in Italy ; they were engraved by Cornelis Galle the elder. The founder of the family of Antwerp engravers of this name was Philip Galle, born at Haarlem in 1537, a pupil of Dirk Volkertz Coornhert, who came to settle in Antwerp about 1570, obtained the right of citizenship there on the 20<sup>th</sup> July, 1571, made a number of engravings on copper, and published a large number engraved by others. For more than 120 years the Galles were the principal engravers and publishers of engravings at Antwerp. Philip Galle had several sons, the two eldest of whom, Theodoor and Cornelis, practised their father's art. Theodoor was baptized on the 16<sup>th</sup> July, 1571 ; he visited Italy, and at Rome made the drawings for the *Illustrium Imagines* which was printed for him by the Plantin press and published in 1598. He married Catharina Moerentorf, sister of Balthasar Moretus ; one of his sisters, Josina, became the wife of the engraver Adriaan Collaert ; his other sister, Catharina, married the engraver Karel van Mallery. He died near the end of 1633 or the beginning of 1634. After his father's death, which happened on the 12<sup>th</sup> March, 1612, he took on the direction of the copper-plate printing, which he controlled till the end of his life. Cornelis Galle was born in 1576 ; like Theodoor, he visited Italy, and returned in 1604. About 1637 he settled in Brussels, where he died in 1650. His son, Cornelis the younger, born in 1615, practised his father's art, lived with him at Brussels from 1637 to 1641, married on the 23<sup>rd</sup> December of that year and then returned to set up in Antwerp, where he died in 1678. His son, Cornelis III, also became an engraver. After the death of Theodoor Galle, his son Jan succeeded him as proprietor of the press. When Jan Galle died, in 1676, he was succeeded by his son Norbert, who worked till 1693.

(1) On Rubens's engravers, see : HENRI HYMANS : *La gravure dans l'École de Rubens* (Olivier, Brussels, 1879). — In. *Lucas Vorsterman* (Emile Bruylant, Brussels, 1893). — ADOLF ROSENBERG : *Die Rubensstecher* (Gesellschaft für vervielfältigende Kunst, Vienna, 1893).

Theodoor Galle, his brother Cornelis, and the latter's son, Cornelis the younger, were Rubens's first engravers, and those who worked for him the longest. None of them produced work of exceptional merit, but they had the honour of receiving lessons from the master before any other engraver, and out of these lessons they made themselves a manner. Philip Galle, the founder of the dynasty, belonged to the class of engravers and publishers which had made Antwerp the great market for the productions of their art. They engraved a large number of series and single plates, representing for the most part subjects taken from Holy Scripture and done after Flemish painters like Marten De Vos, Frans Floris, Otho Vænius, Crispin van den Broeck, Stradanus, Heemskerck, De Momper, and Bril, or else after Italian masters. Besides the Galles, these early engravers were Gerard De Jode, Peter van der Heyden or America, Crispin van de Passe, Peter van der Borch; the Wiericx brothers, Jan, Hieronymus and Antonius; the Collaerts, Adriaan and Jan; the Sadeleers, Raphael the elder and the younger, Egidius, Joost, and Jan, Karel van Mallery, J. B. Barbé, and many others. All these artists belonged to the same school of the Netherlands, of which the most remarkable representatives were Goltzius in Holland and the Wiericx brothers at Antwerp. They were distinguished by the fine execution of their plates; with them an engraving must make its effect by the violent opposition of white and black, and at the same time the *nuances* must be delicately indicated by features resembling miniature-work, especially in plates of small size. Provided that their work were fine and agreeable in itself, they were less anxious about giving a faithful rendering of the picture with its effects of colour, shade, and light.

The productions of Philip Galle are no different from those of his contemporaries. His eldest son, Theodoor, remained faithful to the traditions of his father; his plates are as much worked upon and as timid as those of his predecessors, and it is probable that he was assisted by engravers working in his studio. It was he who printed most of the proofs made after Rubens's drawings for the house of Plantin. There are only two with his signature, the frontispiece to the *Breviarium Romanum* of 1614 (*Œuvre*. N° 1250) and that to the *Mascardi Silva* of 1622 (*Œuvre*. N° 1288). It was he, again, who supplied the title-page and the vignettes for the *Optica* of Aguilonius, of 1613, (*Œuvre*. Nos 1234-1240); the plates and frames for the *Breviarium* of 1614 (*Œuvre*. Nos 1250-1262); and the frontispieces to *Thomas a Jesu, de Contemplatione Divina*, of 1620 (*Œuvre*. N° 1308) and to the *Annales Sacri* of Agostino Tornielli, of 1620 (*Œuvre*. N° 1309).

Jan Collaert, who was evidently one of his collaborators, worked exactly in the same manner; he also engraved several frontispieces for books after drawings by Rubens: that of the Bible of 1617 (*Œuvre*. N° 1244), the *Vadersboeck* of Rosweyde in the same year (*Œuvre*. N° 1296), the *Gelrische Rechten* of 1620 (*Œuvre*. N° 1268), Mudzaert's *Kerckelycke Historie*, of 1622 (*Œuvre*. N° 1291), a printer's mark for van Keerbergen, and probably also the frontispiece to the *Generale Legende der Heylighen* by Ribadineira and Rosweyde, of 1619 (*Œuvre*. N° 1295).

The contributions of Cornelis Galle the elder, Theodoor's brother, were far more considerable. He had the honour of engraving the first plates after drawings by Rubens. It is to him we owe the engravings illustrating the *Electorum libri II* (*Œuvre*. Nos 1297-1301) by Philip Rubens, published in 1608; and the large « Judith » (*Œuvre*. N° 125) dedicated by

Rubens to Johannes Woverius, which we know from the master's own statement to have been the first plate engraved after one of his pictures. In the *Electa* engravings, mechanical work is still to the fore, although we fancy that in reproducing the statues of Minerva and Flora, the engraver has given some idea of the softness and colour of Rubens's drawing. The « Judith » was engraved under Rubens's direction : the opposition of light and shade is very strong and thick and sombre tones dominate, but the master's works of this period presented the same peculiarity. Innumerable plates engraved after pictures by Rubens are attributed to one or other of the Cornelis Galles ; but for the most part they are wrongly so attributed, or were merely published by them, and among those ascribed to them with more or less reason, we find scarcely anything but insignificant copies of plates or parts of plates engraved by others : all that bears the name of Galle, therefore, has a hint of the shop about it, and has more to do with trade than art. Besides the « Judith » by Cornelis the elder, we can only mention as works of any importance the « Ecce Homo » after one of Rubens's earliest pictures (*Œuvre*. N<sup>o</sup> 272), the « Dead Christ on the knees of his mother » (*Œuvre*. N<sup>o</sup> 320), the « Four Fathers of the Church » (*Œuvre*. N<sup>o</sup> 368), the « Virgin in a niche hung with flowers » (*Œuvre*. N<sup>o</sup> 201), and the « Venus suckling the Loves » (*Œuvre*. N<sup>o</sup> 701). Among these there is not one of any really great artistic worth.

The first engraver on whom Rubens laid his hand was not, therefore, exactly a great find ; and so after one or two moderately fortunate experiments, he employed him no more on works of great importance. He kept him, however, till the end of his life, to engrave plates intended for book-illustrations, and in this branch Cornelis Galle the elder did some excellent work, the best ever done after Rubens's drawings. The master's habit was to throw his drawings on the paper in a broad, free manner, and sometimes to do them in grisaille ; in his maturity especially, the superb and powerful lines of his drawings needed some adaptation before they could appear in a printed book. Cornelis Galle understood admirably how to translate Rubens's intentions. Little by little his manner became more full of colour, softer, and more Rubenian, though he never reached the power and breadth of the great engravers of the school of Rubens. He it was who engraved the greater part of the illustrations for books made after drawings by Rubens. It would take too long to enumerate them.

During Rubens's last years and after his death, Cornelis Galle the younger also engraved some frontispieces.

JACOB DE BIE. — Chance willed that another Antwerp engraver should engrave one of the first frontispieces drawn by Rubens. This was Jacob De Bie, printer and publisher of engravings, who brought out a whole series of works on Numismatics. At the solicitation of his friend Nicolas Rockox, Rubens drew the frontispiece for one of the books entitled *Imperatorum Romanorum Numismata Aurea* (*Œuvre*. N<sup>o</sup> 1243), printed in 1615 by Gerard van Wolschaten and Hendrik Aertssens ; Jacob De Bie engraved the drawing and produced one of most beautiful frontispieces engraved after Rubens.

THE DUTCH ENGRAVERS. — In the course of the first eight or nine years after his return from Italy, few of Rubens's pictures were reproduced. The first to engrave after him were



Hollanders, the compatriots of Goltzius, or artists belonging to his school. Thus, in the earliest years we meet with Willem Swanenburg, who, in 1611, engraved the « Christ at meat with the pilgrims to Emmaus » (*Œuvre*. N<sup>o</sup> 342), and in 1612 « Lot and his daughters » (*Œuvre*. N<sup>o</sup> 104). Swanenburg was born at Leyden. He never went to Antwerp, and died in 1612; the two pictures he reproduced were probably then in Holland ; we know this for certain of the first, and have reason for supposing it of the second.

A second Dutch engraver, Egbert van Panderen, engraved the « Virgin interceding with Christ for the human race » (*Œuvre*. N<sup>o</sup> 383). This picture had been painted about 1612 ; it was engraved shortly afterwards. Van Panderen was born at Haarlem, but in 1606 he was admitted into the confraternity of St Luke at Antwerp, and, like Swanenburg, he worked for Otho Vænius.

A third, Andreas Stock, engraved « Abraham sacrificing Isaac » (*Œuvre*. N<sup>o</sup> 107). The picture dates from Rubens's earliest period, for in 1614 a certain Plessiers asked for leave to engrave it.

A fourth Dutch engraver, who engraved a plate after a picture by Rubens, was Jacob Matham, son-in-law and pupil of Hendrik Goltzius. He engraved « Samson and Delilah », after the picture in the possession of Nicolas Rockox (*Œuvre*. N<sup>o</sup> 115) and dating from the first years after Rubens's return. Matham's engraving must have been made between 1611 and 1615.

The fifth artist of the Netherlands who engraved after Rubens was Jan Muller, who in 1615 engraved the portraits of Albert and Isabella (*Œuvre*. N<sup>os</sup> 875, 967).

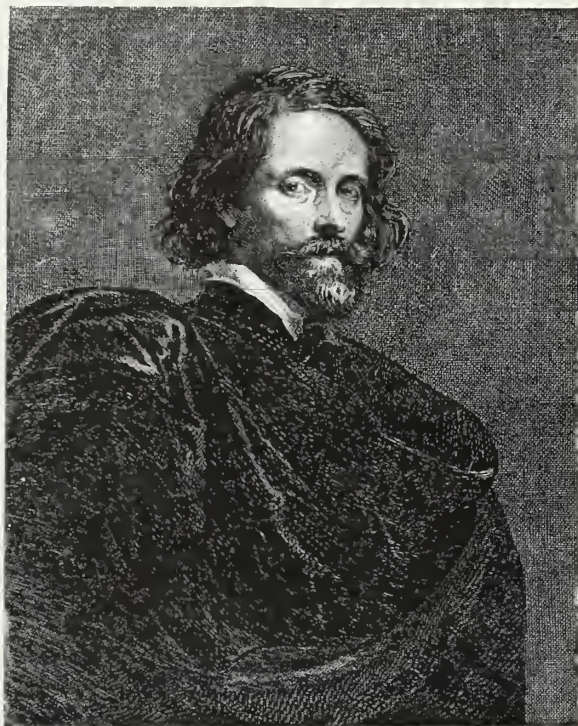
It is a singular thing that all these artists should have lived and worked outside the Spanish Netherlands ; chance, no doubt, is partly responsible, and the only explanation of the fact is that the compatriots and disciples of Hendrik Goltzius were more inclined and better fitted to engrave large plates after pictures. It is certain that they were not chosen by Rubens, and still more certain that they did not work under his direction ; their style is not his, their work is not the reflection of his. The only surprising thing is that a stranger should have been called in to engrave the portraits of the Archdukes Albert and Isabella, which were for years the official portraits, so to speak, of the sovereigns of the country. In this case, the engraver entrusted with this important task must have been directly or indirectly chosen by Rubens, which proves that at that time no one in Antwerp was considered capable of carrying it out satisfactorily. The plates of the three first Dutch engravers have little artistic value, and are remarkable for their stiff, dry style, which is as little Rubenian as possible ; Matham's « Samson and Delilah » has more colour, but strays widely from the master's manner. The portraits engraved by Muller are master-pieces in their way. They hold up for our admiration the brilliant and finished work of an excellent pupil of Goltzius, but they have not the richness nor the colour, which distinguish Rubens's painting and the engravings executed under his direction. They give the smallest details of the lace, the ribbons and the jewels worn by the monarchs, but they show no sign of the broad handling of the master. They are state-portraits, worked with extreme minuteness. The fact that the legend gives Rubens the title of court-painter to the Archdukes corroborates the supposition that the portraits had an official character.

MICHEL LASNE. — In 1617 Rubens found the need of entrusting the reproduction of his works to engravers working in his manner and under his direction. He understood what a powerful means this would be of spreading far and wide the reform he had introduced into the art, and giving a new life to engraving, which had acquired so much importance at Antwerp. He looked about, therefore, for an artist capable of understanding him, and helping in the execution of his plans. His first choice fell on a Frenchman, Michel Lasne, who was born at Caen, had come to settle in Antwerp, and in 1617 had paid six florins to the Confraternity of St Luke « to have the right to work for two months in that town ». His stay was probably prolonged beyond that term, for he engraved at least six plates for Rubens. The first to be mentioned are the two frontispieces to the works of Goltzius published by De Bie : *Numismata imperatorum Romanorum aurea et argentea*, of 1617 (*Œuvre*. No 1270), and *Græciæ Universæ Asiæque minoris et insularum Numismata*, of 1618 (*Œuvre*. No 1271); then « Susannah and the two Elders » (*Œuvre*. No 133), a « Holy Family » (*Œuvre*. No 227), and two different reproductions of « St Francis of Assisi receiving the infant Christ from the hands of the Virgin » (*Œuvre*. Nos 419, 420); finally, also, no doubt, a « Madonna » (*Œuvre*. No 194) and a « Christ on the Cross » (*Œuvre*. No 299). Michel Lasne probably spent a year or two in this country before returning to France. Rubens did not much regret his departure; he was not the man he was in search of, his manner being too much like his predecessors' : it was too stiff and too constricted for the passionate conceptions and the warm colour of Rubens.

PETER SOUTMAN. — He then made a new experiment; this time he approached a Hollander, Peter Soutman, whom we have met already among his pupils as a painter. In 1619-1620, he lived in Antwerp and had a pupil entered in the Confraternity of St Luke; he was probably already living there at the time when Rubens painted his savage Hunting-pieces, and collaborated in them as painter and as engraver. At this period he engraved four of the Hunting-pieces, the Lion and Lioness (*Œuvre*. No 1153), the Wolves and Foxes (*Œuvre*. No 1156), the Boar (*Œuvre*. No 1159), and the Crocodile and Hippopotamus (*Œuvre*. No 1161), and under all four he wrote : « Composed by Rubens », and at the side : « Composed, drawn and published by Soutman », thus attributing himself an equal part to the master's in the original composition of the work. This claim has evidently no foundation; Soutman may have found the way to engrave them, but he had no share in the composition of the Hunting-pieces. He engraved several other plates after Rubens's pictures : the « Defeat of Sennacherib » (*Œuvre*. No 124), a « Miraculous Draught of Fishes » (*Œuvre*. No 253), the « Christ on the Cross » (*Œuvre*. No 289), a « Descent from the Cross » (*Œuvre*. No 326), a « Rape of Proserpine » (*Œuvre*. No 672), a « Procession of Silenus » (*Œuvre*. No 679), and a « Birth of Venus » (*Œuvre*. No 686). He engraved not only pictures by Rubens, but also drawings made by him after other masters, like the « Christ giving the keys to St Peter », after Raphael, the « Last Supper » after Lionardo da Vinci, the « Christ borne to the tomb », after Michael Angelo da Caravaggio, the « Sultan and his Vizier », after Elsheimer, and « Danae », after Titian. None of these works mention Rubens's name, nor the fact of his intervention, but there is a constant tradition that the engraver worked after drawings by the master, and the style of the engravings fully confirms the assertion. Long after Soutman had returned to Holland he engraved yet



another of the Boarhunts (*Œuvre*. N° 1160) and the « Fall of the Damned » (*Œuvre*. N° 93), both dated 1642. His manner is completely different from that of the engravers of the older school. Far from aiming at finished and elegant execution and an agreeable effect, he produced plates so worked as to show deliberate roughness; he sought neither for half-tones nor carefully managed transitions, but seemed rather to try and obtain violent oppositions of light and shade by contrasting the intensest blacks with the luminous parts. His plates are more like an etcher's than a copper-plate engraver's; and yet they are extremely effective; the artist



LUCAS VORSTERMAN — Engraved by Lucas Vorsterman the younger after A. Vandyck.

breaks with the smooth, polished, dry and hard touch of former days; he tries before all for colour and striking effect. Passing from one extreme to the other, he fell into the opposite exaggeration to that of his predecessors. Rubens perhaps was impressed by it, but he did not declare himself satisfied. He did not keep Soutman long, and looked out for young engravers whose manner was not yet formed and whom he might induce to work to his taste. « I could much have wished », he wrote on the 23<sup>rd</sup> January, 1619, to Peter van Veen, « that the engraver had succeeded better in giving a faithful rendering of his model, for I find it less inconvenient to have a young man, full of the desire to do well, working under my eyes, than to leave great artists to work after their own fancy ».

LUCAS VORSTERMAN. — The first he attached to himself was Lucas Emiel Vorsterman. He was born at Bommel in Gelderland in 1596, if we may take literally the declaration in which he affirms that in 1636 he was forty years old. Probably we might assign rather less distant a date to his birth, for one of his plates, the « Rest in Egypt », after Baroccio, was engraved at the latest in 1607, when he would have been no more than eleven.

On the 28<sup>th</sup> August, 1620, he obtained the right of citizenship of Antwerp; in the same year he was admitted master in the Confraternity of St Luke; on the 9<sup>th</sup> April of the previous year he had married Anna Franck. Vorsterman, therefore, was in Antwerp at the beginning of 1619; it is more than probable that he had been living there already for several months. He may have been about twenty-four on his arrival. He had served his apprenticeship in Holland, where he took as his models the works of Hendrik Goltzius, the master universally admired and imitated. His biographer, M. Henri Hymans, believes that he began with three small plates; a « Madonna with the child Jesus sleeping in his cradle », after Rubens (*Œuvre*. N° 188), a small



« Charles V », after Titian, and the « Man yawning » after Peasant Breughel ; to these engravings succeeded two portraits after pictures by Titian belonging to Rubens, a Charles V and an Isabella d'Este. However this may be, we find him working for Rubens in 1619. In the following year Rubens published nine engravings after his pictures by Vorsterman. Next year there appeared five more and in 1623 yet another in six sheets and two frontispieces.

We are only speaking here of dated engravings ; if we went on to add those that appeared undated, we should reach almost double the number. The subjects engraved by Vorsterman were chosen from among the most remarkable of Rubens's pictures and those that lent themselves best to engraving ; the painter used to commission the engraver for the work and pay him for it, and then took over the sale of the engravings himself.

THE COPYRIGHT IN THE ENGRAVINGS. — Rubens undertook the affairs of this new enterprise very seriously, and at the very outset he tried to guarantee the engravings made after his pictures against forged imitation, in order to protect his artistic property, at any rate in this country. We know that at this date, and even before, the works of celebrated engravers had been imitated. The etchings of the most popular painters were also forged, and even the signatures used to be imitated. Rubens wished no engravings after his pictures put on the market except those he had had made under his own direction, and he did not intend that they should be copied ; not to mention the pecuniary interest, he wished, as an artist, to prevent inferior reproductions from giving a false idea of his works.

He began by approaching the States-General of the United Provinces in order to obtain a copyright to protect him against forgery. The reason is instantly obvious : Holland was the abode of the talented engravers who were most capable of engraving plates after his pictures or imitating plates made under his direction. Some of his works had been engraved there long before, and there Balthasar Flessiers, a painter of The Hague, had applied to the States-General for a licence to publish the « Sacrifice of Abraham » by Rubens, a demand which was rejected on the 29<sup>th</sup> October, 1614, but granted on the 24<sup>th</sup> December following.

On the 4<sup>th</sup> January, 1619, Rubens wrote to Peter van Veen, an advocate at The Hague and brother of Otho Vænius, to ask him how he ought to proceed in order to obtain a licence which would permit him to publish certain plates engraved in his studio, in the United Provinces, and to prevent anyone imitating them. Van Veen explained to Rubens the course to follow and even supported his request. The subject of it was eighteen prints, among which were thirteen engraved by Vorsterman, four executed later by other engravers, and one which was never engraved. Rubens's application was rejected on the 17<sup>th</sup> May, 1619. Before the result was known to him, he had approached his friend Sir Dudley Carleton, the English envoy at The Hague, who enjoyed great influence there, in order to obtain his support. This he secured, and the result was soon apparent. On the 8<sup>th</sup> June the States-General reconsidered their decision and declared that at the request of Peter Rubens, living at Antwerp, and » recommended by lord Carleton, ambassador of the king of great Britain, the petitioner shall » present to their High Powers a copy of each plate which he has the intention of publishing ». That could not be done immediately, for most of the plates for which the licence was asked were not finished in 1619. It was not till the beginning of the following year that he was able

to send the engravings, and then only a part of them. Whereupon, on the 24<sup>th</sup> February, 1620, the States-General of the Low Countries forbade « each and all of the inhabitants of the said Low Countries who are occupied in copper-plate engraving or etching, to imitate or to reproduce by engraving or etching the inventions of Peter Rubens, painter, domiciled in Antwerp, which have been or shall be engraved on copper and of which he shall have sent the proofs to their High Powers, and this during the space of seven years, under pain of



PERSEUS AND ANDROMEDA (Hermitage, St Petersburg).

» confiscation of the said imitations by engraving or etching, besides a fine of one hundred florins Carolus ».

At the same time that he was employing the services of his friends at The Hague to obtain the desired licence, he was taking steps in Paris to obtain similar protection from the court of France. He was a friend of Gaspar Gevartius, the learned Secretary of State, and Gevartius was in relations with Peiresc, with whom we shall have to deal more fully hereafter. Thanks to the intervention of these two men, he succeeded on the 3<sup>rd</sup> July, 1619, in obtaining a licence for ten years. The preamble is particularly favourable to him : « Whereas our dear and well-beloved Peter Paul Rubens », runs the decree, « one of the painters of this century » who most excels in his art, has caused it to be told and represented to us, that for long years » he has practised the making of works of painting, so well fashioned that they are to-day » highly prized among those who have the knowledge of the art, and that he has been invited



TEN LIONS  
Drawing (Albertina, Vienna)



to send the engravers, and then only a part of them. Whereupon on the 9th February, 1620, the States-General of the Low Countries forbade – and did all of the imitations of the said Low Countries, who are occupied in copper-plate engraving or etching, to proceed to so reproduce by engraving or etching the inventions of Peter Rubens, former resident in Antwerp, which have been or shall be engraved on copper and of which he shall have sent the proofs to their High Powers, and this during the space of seven years, under pain of



FIGURE 10. Rubens's drawing of the 'Ten Lions'.

– continuation of life and inventions by engraving or etching, besides a fine of one hundred – florins currency.

At the same time that he was employing the services of his friends at The Hague to obtain the desired licence, he was taking steps in Paris to obtain similar protection from the court of France. He was a friend of Gaspar Grevartius, the learned Secretary of State, and Grevartius was in relations with Peresc, with whom we shall have to deal more fully hereafter. Thanks to the intervention of these two men, he succeeded on the 3rd July, 1619, in obtaining a licence for ten years. The preamble is particularly favourable to him: – Whereas our dear and well-beloved Peter Paul Rubens, one of the painters of this century, who most excellently in his art, has caused it to be told and represented to us, that for long years he has practised the making of works of painting, so well fashioned that they are so highly prized among those who have the knowledge of the art, and that he has been to send







» by his friends to cause to be engraved on copper plates and printed the designs of the most  
 » noble pieces that have come from his hand, the which he could not do without great  
 » charge and expense, for which he could never indemnify himself, if it is permitted to other  
 » engravers and publishers than those whom he may choose to engrave, imitate and print the  
 » same designs which he shall once have made public, which to prevent, We have permitted  
 » and do permit him by these presents to sell and distribute through all our Kingdom and the  
 » Countries in our obedience the album of these drawings and paintings in all the forms and  
 » at all the times soever,  
 » which he shall deem to be  
 » good, during the time and  
 » space of ten consecutive  
 » years, reckoning from the  
 » day and date whereon the  
 » said album shall be completely printed, making for  
 » this effect three express  
 » inhibitions and denials to  
 » all engravers, printers,  
 » publishers and other persons of what quality and  
 » condition soever to engrave print or cause to be  
 » printed, sell or distribute  
 » the album aforesaid within  
 » the time aforesaid without  
 » the leave of the said petitioner ». The whole under  
 a penalty of 1000 livres (1).



VENUS AND ADONIS (Hermitage, St. Petersburg).

Before the 3<sup>rd</sup> October, 1620, Rubens had already sent a copy of his engravings to Peiresc to have it deposited in the royal library, in order to safeguard his rights. An action set on foot by Peiresc in 1635 proves that the licence, which expired in 1629, had been renewed in 1632.

On the 29<sup>th</sup> July, 1619, the Archdukes accorded him a similar licence in Brabant, which was to be operative for twelve years, and punished the imitation of these engravings by confiscation and a fine of thirty florins Rhenish ; on the 16<sup>th</sup> January, 1620, the sovereigns extended this licence to all their States. In 1630, the king of Spain granted him a like licence through the whole extent of his possessions for a term of twelve years ; on the 22<sup>nd</sup> March, 1644, it was renewed for twelve years for the benefit of his heir.

LUCAS VORSTERMAN. — Rubens was protected, therefore, against all infringement of his right of artistic property, and the first plates engraved by Vorsterman appeared in 1620, with

(1) *Bulletin-Rubens*, III. p. 193.

the licence of the Archdukes, the United Provinces of the Netherlands, and the king of France (1). They were masterly works. Vandyck had made the drawings after the master's pictures, and Rubens had superintended the execution of the engravings in person. In Vorsterman's productions, the finish of the old school is combined with the vigour of the Rubenian manner: the plates of this year are distinguished by the exact, almost niggling rendering of the details, and the happy harmony of the whole; their appearance is brilliant without being hard; the value of the tones is given in a way that enables us to perceive Rubens's colour in the colourless engraving. These plates mark the advent of a new school of engraving, the school of Rubens, which was to flourish throughout the rest of the century and occupy a lofty rank in the history of copper-plate engraving; and the influence of which was to be maintained long afterwards, and to make itself felt in our own days.

Unhappily, Vorsterman was not to work for long under Rubens's direction. In 1622 an unlucky event put an end to their collaboration. Vorsterman suffered from meningitis. He was probably subject to the attacks of this malady in 1620, for on the 30<sup>th</sup> April, 1622, Rubens wrote to Peter van Veen that for two years he had produced little in the way of engravings in consequence of the crotchets of his engraver, who little by little was completely losing his head, and striving to prove that his name and his engraving alone gave the prints the whole of their value. Worse still, he went so far in his madness as to insult and threaten Rubens in public, so that the painter's friends judged it necessary to demand for him the special protection of the public authorities. In April, 1622, they approached the president of the privy council of His Majesty the King, representing to him that Rubens, who is a man endowed with noble faculties, without speaking of his talent for painting, which is admired by all, has gone in great danger of his life by the attacks of an impudent person who, in the judgment of several, does not enjoy all his reason, and they pray him in consequence to have a letter written to the magistrate of the town of Antwerp to recommend him to extend special protection to Rubens as a person in whose safety His Majesty is particularly interested. They had already themselves invoked the protection of the town council, but that protection had been refused them. On the 29<sup>th</sup> of the same month their petition was granted and the magistrate of Antwerp was bidden to keep special watch over the peace and security of Rubens.

In 1623 there again appeared several plates engraved by Vorsterman after Rubens, but they had been engraved the year before, or finished by another artist. In 1624, Vorsterman departed for England, whither he had been summoned by Thomas Howard, Earl of Arundel, the celebrated amateur of art. In 1630 he returned to Antwerp, where he worked a great deal for Vandyck, till 1632. In 1638 there appeared further two portraits of celebrated men engraved by

(1) On the earliest engravings he published, Rubens mentioned the licences he had obtained in these words: *Cum privilegiis Regis Christianissimi, Principum Belgarum et Ordinum Bataviae*. All Vorsterman's plates and the earliest by Schelte a Bolswert bear this inscription, which mentions the licences granted by the king of France, the States-General of Holland, and the Archdukes. He was not always over careful of accuracy in the use of it, for he put it also on the plates engraved by Witdoeck, which date from 1638. The more recent engravings have this inscription: *Cum privilegiis Regis Christianissimi, Serenissimae Infantis et Ordinum Confederatorum*. The Archduke Albert is no longer mentioned, and the Estates of Holland are replaced by those of the United Provinces. We find this inscription on the engravings by Pontius and others from 1627 onwards, that is to say while the Archduke's licence, which ran from 1619 to 1631, was still in force; the first licence from the States-General was the only one that had then expired.

him after Rubens, but it is more than probable that they had been engraved before 1622. Vorsterman lived till 1675, and died in want. The years in which he worked for Rubens and Vandyck were the most brilliant of his career ; the rest of it is of no interest here.

BOËTIUS AND SCHELTE A BOLSWERT. — Among the first engravers, in merit no less than in date, we must reckon the two brothers, Boëtius and Schelte a Bolswert. They were both born at Bolswert in Friesland, Boëtius about 1580, and Schelte a few years later. They both won some reputation by important works before leaving their native country to come and settle in the southern Low Countries. Boëtius was living at Antwerp on the 12<sup>th</sup> August, 1617, when Balthasar Moretus paid him 31 florins for the portraits of the two dukes of Brabant (1). In 1620 he became a member of the Sodality of the Celibates, and was admitted master in the Confraternity of St Luke. We believe that Schelte a Bolswert arrived in Antwerp at the same time as his brother ; but he was not admitted master till 1625-1626. About 1628 the Bolswerts spent some time in Brussels. Some of the plates they provided for the *Académie de l'Espée* by Gérard Thibault, published in 1628, are dated from that town. They were still occupied with this work when they returned to Antwerp, where Boëtius died on the 25<sup>th</sup> March, 1633, and Schelte on the 12<sup>th</sup> December, 1659. Boëtius a Bolswert only engraved five plates after Rubens, the « Judgment of Solomon » (*Œuvre*. N<sup>o</sup> 122), the « Resurrection of Lazarus » (*Œuvre*. N<sup>o</sup> 263), the « Calvary » in the Antwerp Museum (*Œuvre*. N<sup>o</sup> 296), the « Last Supper » (*Œuvre*. N<sup>o</sup> 265), and a « Head of Cæsar » (*Œuvre*. N<sup>o</sup> 1216). All these plates were engraved after the 13<sup>th</sup> July, 1621, for the licence was granted after the death of the Archduke Albert. The « Christ *au coup de lance* » is dated 1631, and it is quite possible that the other plates also date from the engraver's last years. The work of Boëtius a Bolswert still keeps some of the finish and the brilliance of that of Vorsterman, but he has more vigour, firmness, and breadth. He understands Rubens, and represents perfectly the richness of his colour and the epic character of his forms. His plates count among the best that have ever been executed after the master.

Schelte a Bolswert is the engraver of Rubens *par excellence* ; no one else worked after him so much ; he engraved no less than 86 plates after the great painter on subjects of all kinds ; religious, historical, and mythological pictures, portraits, hunting-pieces and landscapes. In this last branch alone he engraved five large plates and twenty small ones. No one ever understood and represented Rubens so well under the many aspects assumed by his art ; in the earliest days the master's form was firmer, his drawing more elegant, his colour richer ; later his painting became softer, his drawing freer, and his tones less clear ; all these qualities recur in the work of the engraver, with the vigour, the movement, and the transparence that were characteristic of the painter.

Rubens appears to have very rarely employed the two Bolswerts, the younger especially, on his own account. The plates of Boëtius mention Rubens's licence ; among the numerous plates of Schelte only four have it. One of them, the « Miraculous draught of fishes » (*Œuvre*. N<sup>o</sup> 245), was, we believe, one of the two engravings mentioned by Rubens in his letter to

(1) Adi 12 (Augusti M.DC.XVII) a Bolswert pour deux effigies des ducs de Brabant taillées fl. 31 (Archives of the Plantin-Moretus Museum. Semaines des Compagnons commencées en Julio 1617 et finissans en Juin 1624 f<sup>o</sup> 7).



Dudley Carleton of the 28<sup>th</sup> May, 1619, as having been presented by him to the members of the States-General, in order to win their support for the granting of the licence. At that time, therefore, Schelte a Bolswert must have done much work at Antwerp. He engraved after Rubens until the painter's death, and a considerable number of his plates appeared after the decease of the master.

PAUL PONTIUS. — The third engraver of great renown who worked in Rubens's service



SHELTE A BOLSWERT  
Engraved by Adr. Lommelin after A. Vandyck.

was Paul Pontius or Dupont. He was born on the 31<sup>st</sup> March, 1603, was apprenticed on the 3<sup>rd</sup> December, 1616, to Osias Beet, a little known painter, and afterwards worked under the direction of Lucas Vorsterman; in 1626-1627 he was admitted master in the Confraternity of St Luke. He continued to work at Antwerp till his death, which took place on the 16<sup>th</sup> January, 1658. He was the first in date after the Galles of the Antwerp engravers of Rubens, and remained the most distinguished of them. The earliest of his engravings we know is a « Susannah and the Elders » (*Œuvre*. No 133), which dates from 1624; in the same year he also engraved a portrait of « Wladislas Sigismund, king of Poland » (*Œuvre*. No 1078), and the « Assumption of the Virgin » painted by Rubens for the church of La Chapelle at Brussels and now in the Museum at Düsseldorf (*Œuvre*. No 358). Pontius made rapid progress, for this last work is one of his best. Two years later, he completed his

« St Rock », after the picture in the cathedral of Alost (*Œuvre*. No 488), which is regarded as his master-piece. He was then only 23. He worked for Rubens till the painter's death; and even afterwards he engraved several more plates after pictures by the master, like that in Rubens's mortuary chapel, and the « Massacre of the Innocents » (*Œuvre*. No 181), which appeared in 1643. To some extent he was the official engraver of Rubens and to the State. He it was who engraved the famous portrait of the master in a felt hat, those of Philip IV and Elizabeth of Bourbon, king and queen of Spain, the Archduchess Isabella and her successor the Cardinal-Infant Ferdinand, and the minister, the count-duke of Olivarez. Altogether he produced 42 plates after Rubens. Like the other engravers of the master he often chose for his subjects the works of pupils or imitators; thus he was one of the principal engravers of Vandyck.

With Vorsterman and the two Bolswerts he forms the illustrious quartette, which has made the renown of the Rubens school of engraving famous through the centuries. He has not the

brilliance of the first, nor the vigour of Schelte a Bolswert; in all his works he appears as the faithful interpreter, careful and full of the master's taste; in his best engravings he has a robust grace, a richness and harmony of tints which bring out admirably the magnificence of Rubens's painting: his portraits are full of freshness and life, and express the character of the model in a striking manner.

HANS WITDOECK. — During the last years of his life, Rubens took an engraver into his service, as he had taken Lucas Vorsterman about 1620. This time it was Hans Witdoeck, born on the 8<sup>th</sup> December, 1615, entered on the registers of the Confraternity of St Luke in 1630-1631 as a pupil of Lucas Vorsterman, and admitted master in 1632-1633. He only worked for a year and a half with his master, and was then placed by his father in the studio of Cornelis Schut, for whom he engraved in 1633. From Schut's service he passed into Rubens's, for whom he worked in 1635. Two years later, on the 8<sup>th</sup> April, 1637, as we learn from a letter from Balthasar Moretus to Franciscus de Raphelingien, Rubens had only one engraver, and did not keep even him constantly at work; this, no doubt, was our Hans Witdoeck.



PAUL PONTIUS  
Engraved by Paul Pontius after A. Vandyck.

Rubens entrusted him with a number of important works, like the « Elevation of the Cross », one of his early works, which had been awaiting its engraver for 25 years, and his « St Ildefonso », one of his master-pieces. In 1638 there appeared seven engravings by Witdoeck, and two others in 1639. In all he made fifteen after Rubens; some which appeared undated were no doubt done after the painter's death. That is the case, for instance, with the « Christ laid in the tomb » (*Œuvre*. N<sup>o</sup> 322), which Rubens left unfinished, and Witdoeck reproduced faithfully in its imperfect state.

The pictures he reproduced belong for the most part to the master's last period, and it is characteristic of Witdoeck's style that he tried to bring it into conformity with the profoundly altered manner then adopted by Rubens: he too sacrificed drawing to the effects of light and shade, which he strove to render, not always with success. It is to be regretted that Rubens should have delayed having his master-piece, the « Elevation of the Cross », engraved, until a time when, having completely altered his manner himself, he had accustomed his engraver to his new methods.

Side by side with these principal and, so to speak, official engravers of the works of



Rubens, we meet with some others as well, after the first appearance of Vorsterman. We will devote a few words to them here.

NICOLAS RYCKEMANS AND OTHER ENGRAVERS. — One of the first was Nicolas Ryckemans, who engraved the plates of the Palaces of Genoa, published in 1622, and the « Christ and the twelve Apostles », which Rubens had painted in Spain, and of which he offered a replica in 1618 to Dudley Carleton. He also engraved six other pictures painted about the same time. He seems, therefore, to have worked regularly for Rubens, and as his plates bear no mention of the licence, those that are undated must be prior to 1620. On the death of Isabella Brant in 1626, the master still owed him 900 florins for work done. Nicolas Lauwers worked for Rubens at the same time: he engraved the « Adoration of the Kings » which is now in the Brussels Museum (*Œuvre*. N<sup>o</sup> 158). The plate appeared in 1620 or 1621. During the following years he engraved some half-dozen other pictures after him. Peter De Jode, father and son, also engraved the works of Rubens; the first was the engraver of the « Christ giving the keys to St Peter »; the second executed several plates, among the first rank of which we must mention the « Three Graces ». Some of these plates appeared in Rubens's life-time, the rest after his death. Marin Robin, or Marinus, a pupil of Vorsterman, produced four plates after Rubens between 1632 and 1639, among which the « Miracles of St Ignatius » and the « Miracles of St François Xavier » are equally distinguished. Jacob Neefs engraved the « Martyrdom of St Thomas » in 1639. Towards the end of his life Rubens had a « Crucifixion of St Andrew » engraved by van der Does; the heirs of the master had to pay 23 florins for the drawing and the plate, which the engraver had pledged.

Rubens's school of engraving did not die with him in Antwerp; the great engravers he had formed had pupils and successors, who continued to take his works as models during his last years and after his death. Among those who produced plates of real merit, we must mention Cornelis van Caukercken, Peter Clouwet, Peter De Balliu, Conrad Lauwers, Hendrik Snijers, Lucas Vorsterman the younger, and Richard Collin.

The school extended its branches abroad. Soutman, as we have said, engraved two more plates after Rubens in 1642, after his return to Holland; and he made the engravers placed under his direction, Cornelis Visscher, Suyderhoef, van Sompel, and Louys, work in the taste of the master. In France the tradition was continued by the famous engravers, Gérard Edelinck, Nicolas Pitau, van Schuppen, Vermeulen, and Natalis, who founded the school of French engraving and were the fathers of modern engraving.

THE ETCHERS. — Besides the engravers properly so called, five etchers worked for Rubens, Frans van den Wyngaerden, who was rather a publisher of etchings than an etcher; the painter Willem Panneels, one of Rubens's pupils, who in 1630, 1631, and 1632 executed several etchings full of colour after the master's works, and produced many more of his own, the composition of which was attributed to Rubens; Lucas van Uden, the landscapist, a collaborator with Rubens, who executed four landscapes after the master with much ability; Theodoor van Thulden, another of his pupils, who is chiefly known as an etcher by the large etchings of the « Entry in state of the Cardinal-Infant Ferdinand », which he made after



drawings by Rubens, and finally Rombout Eynhoudts, who made some insignificant etchings of very important works of Rubens.

The question whether Rubens himself ever etched has been much disputed. The catalogues of his works mention as many as eight plates, which are attributed to him with more or less probability. Only one of his plates, the « St Catherine », executed after a ceiling in the Jesuit church at Antwerp, is of high artistic value; two others, the « Bust of Seneca in a niche » and an « Old woman holding a candle », have been attributed to him with some foundation; but these plates were finished by engravers, so that it is difficult now to distinguish the original work of Rubens. The importance attached by the master to etching appears clearly in a letter he wrote to Peter van Veen on the 15<sup>th</sup> June, 1622, in which he says : « I have heard » that you have discovered the secret of etching on copper on a white ground, as Adam » Elsheimer used to do. Before drawing on the plate, he used to cover the copper with a white » coating on which he traced the outlines with a point, going just down to the metal, which » is naturally a little reddish, so that it had the effect of drawing in red chalk on white paper. » I cannot remember the composition of this ground, although he confided the secret to me ». These lines were written, no doubt, at the time when the « St Catherine » was etched.

CHRISTOFFEL JEGHER. — Among the prints made after Rubens, the wood-cuts of Christoffel Jegher occupy an original and important place. Christoffel Jegher, or Jeghers, or again Jegherendorff, was born at Antwerp. Judging from the original form of his name, he was probably of German descent; he was baptised in St Andrew's church on the 24<sup>th</sup> August, 1596; in 1627-1628 he was admitted master in the Confraternity of St Luke, and he died between the 18<sup>th</sup> September, 1652, and the 18<sup>th</sup> September, 1653. He engraved nine plates after Rubens : a « Susannah and the Elders » (*Œuvre*. N<sup>o</sup> 1317), a « Rest in Egypt » (*Œuvre*. N<sup>o</sup> 1318), the « Temptation of Christ in the Desert » (*Œuvre*. N<sup>os</sup> 6 and 1315) the « Coronation of the Virgin » (*Œuvre*. N<sup>os</sup> 18 and 1316), the « Child Jesus and St John playing with a lamb » (*Œuvre*. N<sup>os</sup> 185 and 1319), « Hercules overthrowing Discord » (*Œuvre*. N<sup>os</sup> 771 and 1321), the « Procession of Silenus » (*Œuvre*. N<sup>o</sup> 1320), the « Conversation à la mode » (*Œuvre*. N<sup>o</sup> 1322), and the « Portrait of the Doge Cornaro » (*Œuvre*. N<sup>o</sup> 1323). These cuts were not made after the pictures but after drawings made by Rubens for the engraver, into which he introduced several modifications of his original compositions. Two of these drawings have been preserved, the « Procession of Silenus », which is now in the Cabinet of Prints in the Louvre, and the « Garden of Love » or the *Conversation à la Mode*, lately belonging to Sir Charles Robinson in London. Rubens himself looked over the first proof of the engraving and introduced desirable alterations, as may be seen from the examples of the « Rest in Egypt » and the « Garden of Love » in the Cabinet of Prints at Amsterdam, and those of the « Child Jesus and St John » and the « Temptation in the desert » in the Cabinet of Prints in Paris. Two of these cuts, the « Rest in Egypt », and the « Portrait of the Doge Cornaro », appeared in two colours, black and brown. The blocks were engraved and printed at Rubens's expense, and published by him. We find in the books of the Plantin press that on the 11<sup>th</sup> June, 1633, Balthasar Moretus printed two reams of an engraving of Rubens and, on the 3<sup>d</sup> September following, one ream

of the « Temptation of Christ ». On the 12<sup>th</sup> April, 1636, he debited Rubens again with 72 florins 3 stuyvers for the printing of 2000 wood-engravings.

No common workman was entrusted with the printing of Jegher's blocks, but the engraver himself, as Balthasar Moretus states in a letter addressed on the 15<sup>th</sup> March, 1635, to Marcus van den Tympel, in which he says : « I send you an example of the « Holy Sacrament » engraved by Jegher and printed by himself. He asks 30 florins for the drawing and engraving and offers further to print the block, if you wish it, as he did for Rubens and the engravings made after him » (1).



THE PROCESSION OF SILENUS  
After the engraving by Christoffel Jegher.

It may be admitted that Jegher's blocks were engraved between 1633 and 1640. The artist, who worked regularly from the 5<sup>th</sup> February, 1625, to the end of the year 1643 for the Plantin press and received his salary every week, like a common workman, during the first fifteen years, executed all sorts of plates for Balthasar Moretus and his successor, and among others copied those drawn by Rubens for the Breviaries and Missals of 1613 and 1614.

Conceived directly by Rubens and executed under his direction, Jegher's engravings bear the imprint of the master to a higher degree than all the rest ; they are vigorously drawn, and have an energy, a colour, and a softness, which make them the most characteristic interpretation of Rubens's manner. Before working for Rubens, Jegher had made more than one engraving for the Plantin press ; there is no essential difference between his first

productions and his more recent engravings ; all are treated in a broad and robust manner ; but those he executed under Rubens's direction are distinguished by their boldness and power. If we enquire for the predecessors from whom Jegher may have learned something, we find the wood-engravers, who worked after Titian, Niccola Boldrini and especially Andrea Andreani. Attracted as he was by the Venetian painter, Rubens no doubt equally admired his engravers and would have pointed them out to Jeghers as models.

RUBENS'S RELATIONS WITH HIS ENGRAVERS AND PUBLISHERS. — Not only for Jegher's wood-engravings, but also for the copper-plates executed by his engravers, Rubens either made the drawings himself, or had them made by his pupils ; and in his letter to Peter van Veen of the 30<sup>th</sup> April, 1622, he says that they were more finished and more carefully done

(1) Archives of the Plantin-Moretus Museum. Letters of B. Moretus from 1633 to 1640, p. 164.



than the engravings. The Louvre has several of these drawings. It is very probable, as we have said already, and as Bellori states, that they were made by Vandyck.

Rubens himself made more than one pen-drawing and more than one grisaille, which were intended to serve as models for the engravers and usually differed a little from the original work. Thus, the Louvre has a drawing made by him after his *Baptism of Christ* (*Œuvre*. No 237). In the Albertina we find the *« Christ and the twelve Apostles »* (*Œuvre*. Nos 68 to 80), *« Abraham and Melchizedek »* (*Œuvre*. No 100), and the *« Defeat of Sennacherib »* (*Œuvre*. No 124); in the British Museum, the *« Holy Family »* engraved by Michel Lasne (*Œuvre*. No 227); in the Museum at Weimar, the *« Miraculous Draught of Fishes »* (*Œuvre*. No 245); in the Rotterdam Museum, the *« Christ au coup de poing »* (*Œuvre*. No 291); and in the National Gallery, the *« Descent of the Holy Ghost »* (*Œuvre*. No 353).

Some of the drawings made for the engravers by Rubens or his pupils were never reproduced: these were: the *« Israelites gathering manna »* (*Œuvre*. No 47); the *Baptism of Christ*, the *« Martyrdom of St Stephen »* (*Œuvre*. No 410), the *« Statue of Ceres surrounded by wreaths of flowers »* (*Œuvre*. No 582), by Rubens: and *« St Joseph with the infant Jesus »*, (*Œuvre*. No 465), the *« Beheading of St Paul »* (*Œuvre*. No 478), *« SS. Peter and Paul »* (*Œuvre*. No 480), the *« Crucifixion of St Peter »* (*Œuvre*. No 487), the *« Miracles of St Walburga »* (*Œuvre*. No 285), *« Hero and Leander »* (*Œuvre*. No 629, the *« Shivering Venus »* (*Œuvre*. No 698) and the grisaille after *« Thomyris and Cyrus »* (*Œuvre*. No 792); all these by pupils or engravers.

Sometimes Rubens completely changed the composition of his pictures for engraving, as he did with the *« Visit of the Virgin to Elizabeth »*, and the *« Dedication in the Temple »*, which represent the same subjects as the shutters of the *« Descent from the Cross »*, and were engraved by Peter De Jode and Paul Pontius; and again with the *« Assumption of the Virgin »* in the Cathedral at Antwerp and that in the Brussels Museum, engraved by Schelte a Bolswert, and the *« Resurrection of Lazarus »* in the Berlin Museum. These drawings differ so far from the pictures as to constitute new compositions.

He was in the habit of revising his engravers' plates and retouching them when it seemed to him necessary. By means of white colour or black ink he indicated the places where the tones were to be made paler or darker; the engraver made the alterations indicated, and



ST. CATHERINE — Engraved by Rubens.



submitted a new proof, which the master revised till he was satisfied. Several of the proofs so retouched have been preserved. In the collection of Rubens engravings belonging to the town of Antwerp, we find one of the last pulls of the « Virgin at the fountain » (*Œuvre*. N° 193), in which the retouchings are clearly visible ; the Cabinet of Prints in Paris has a proof of the « Dedication in the Temple », engraved by Pontius, in which Rubens has redrawn the hand of the child holding a torch, and a proof of the « Miracle of St Ildefonso », by Witdoeck, with retouchings by Rubens ; the library of the University of Ghent has a proof of the « Assumption of the Virgin » (*Œuvre*. N° 358), in which the strengthening of the effects of light and shade is indicated. On one occasion it even happened that he almost entirely washed over the engraver's work in black, white, grey, and brown water-colour ; this was in a reproduction of the « Banquet of Herodias » (*Œuvre*. N° 242). We know that he had his own portrait engraved by Pontius (1) done over again as many as three times. In a letter to Peiresc of the 31<sup>st</sup> May, 1635, Rubens says that the engraving of the « Christ *au coup de poing* » could not have been made in 1631, since he spent that year in England, and that the engraving could not have been made in his absence, because, according to his custom, he had retouched it several times (2).

It is obvious from the licences obtained by Rubens, that in 1619 he intended to publish his plates at his own expense. It was only later that he had them printed and sold them to professional publishers. The chief of these was Marten van den Enden, who entered the Confraternity of St Luke in 1630-1631 as a dealer in works of art. His memory deserves to be honoured, for he launched the finest engravings after Rubens, Vandyck and the other painters of the Golden Age of the Antwerp School. In 1645 his business was taken over by Gillis Hendrickx, who, according to the custom of the time, had his predecessor's name erased from the copper to make way for his own. Gaspar Huberti succeeded Gilles Hendrickx and took over his stock of engraved plates ; he died in 1676. After his death various publishers divided the plates between them. Cornelis van Merlen, who died in 1723, had many of them. In 1763 a hundred were in the possession of M. van Heurck at Brussels (3) ; they were bought by Duke Charles of Lorraine, and at the sale of his goods, which took place at Brussels in 1781, 112 of them, nearly all after Rubens, were sold. Most of them fell into the hands of the English engraver Hodges, who published a collection of 88 proofs in Amsterdam between 1804 and 1808, after which he destroyed them. Some of these plates were acquired of recent years by M. Haest, the last of the Antwerp publishers of engravings of the school of Rubens. After his death in 1892, 33 of them were bought by the Plantin-Moretus Museum.

Besides Marten van den Enden, there were other printers and publishers of engravings after Rubens at Antwerp ; Nicolas Lauwers, who published his own plates and those of other engravers ; Antonius Goetkint, who entered the Confraternity of St Luke in 1598, was still living in Antwerp in 1630-1631, and settled later under the name of Bonenfant in Paris, where

(1) H. HYMANS : *Rubens d'après ses portraits* (*Bulletin-Rubens*, II, p. 1).

(2) The engraving in question was made by Pontius after a drawing now in the Boymans Museum at Rotterdam. It is doubtful if there was ever a picture corresponding to this drawing. It is strange to see Rubens so completely wrong in his statement. The engraving is certainly dated 1631, and in that year Rubens was not in England, but at Antwerp.

(3) MENSAERT : *Le peintre amateur*, I, 265.

he died in 1644 ; Cornelis Coebrechts, Jan de Berti and Jacob Moermans who published Witdoeck's plates. Most of the engravers after Rubens printed, published and sold their engravings themselves. But although he allowed others to have his pictures engraved and to sell the prints, he was always in control of the plates engraved under his direction, and remained the owner of them. He paid for the paper and the printing and had the engravings sold on his own account. To prove this, it will be sufficient to refer to the statement of his goods, which he presented on the 28<sup>th</sup> August, 1628, after the death of Isabella Brant. There we find mentioned a sum of 900 florins, paid to Nicolas Ryckemans for engraving several plates, and another sum of 300 florins, paid to Pontius for « the prints » engraved by him. In the same « Inventory of the estate of Isabella Brant » there appears a sum of 1500 florins in exchange for which Rubens took « several engravings on copper by Lucas Vorsterman and other masters, nearly all half worn out », which belonged to the estate (1). It appears also from the same document that 64 florins 10 stuyvers had been paid « for paper sent to the printer », evidently to have engravings printed on it. It must be admitted, therefore, that he kept the property of his works, and that he sued anyone who infringed his rights.

At present we have no information on his relations with his publishers or on what they had to pay him. An item subtracted from his estate on his death proves that even after the appearance on the scene of Marten van den Enden as publisher, he retained the ownership of some of his engravings. It is stated there that on the 16<sup>th</sup> August, 1641, Jacob Moermans had received « the sum of 2685 florins 17 stuyvers arising from the sale on the account of the » deceased of prints, drawings and other objects ». On the 24<sup>th</sup> October, 1645, Moermans had received 2034 florins 7 stuyvers for prints sold by him ; he had also supplied the advocate Rubens with 52 florins' worth of prints, while he had to pay the printer 129 florins 14 stuyvers for money due, and Marten Jacobs 220 florins 10 stuyvers for paper sent to the printers.

Rubens also sent his prints to Paris when they were sold by Michel Tevernier, dealer in works of art and an Antwerper by birth. From Paris they were distributed over the rest of France to be sold. On the 18<sup>th</sup> September, 1627, Peiresc wrote to his friend Pierre Dupuy that he had recently bought at Aix the portrait of Longueval, count de Bucquoy, and that of Olivarez, the last having appeared the year before. Some of the engravings were reproduced in France. That was what compelled him, as he declared before the notary van Breuseghem at Antwerp on the 16<sup>th</sup> June, 1635, « to bring to justice certain engravers, who had copied some of his creations, contrary to » the copyright which had been accorded him by His Majesty the King of France » (2). The events he alludes to took place in that same year, 1635. In May, the parliament of Paris had pronounced judgment in his favour, but the opposite side had begun a civil action to have the matter examined. They established the fact that the licence granted on the 3<sup>rd</sup> July, 1619, for ten years by the king of France had expired on the 3<sup>rd</sup> July, 1629, and had not been renewed till three years later, so that in the interval it had been lawful for the French engravers to reproduce his plates. In a letter of the 31<sup>st</sup> May, 1635, to Peiresc, Rubens opposes this contention with the argument that the plate copied, the « Christ *au coup de poing* », had an indistinct date on it,

(1) *Bulletin-Rubens*, IV, pp. 161, 174, 178, 179.

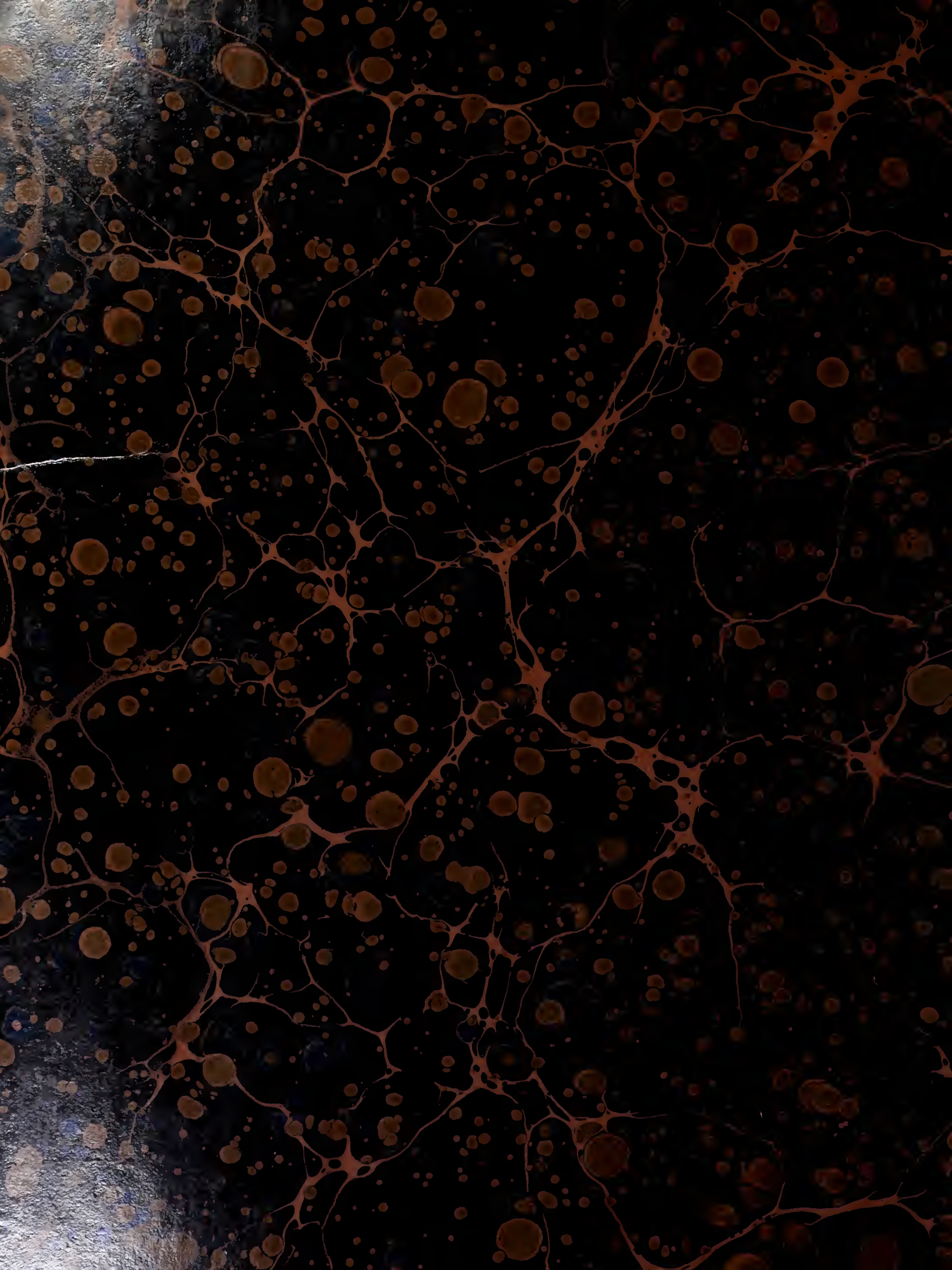
(2) *Antwerpsch Archievenblad*, IV, p. 465.

which might be taken for 1631 or 1632, but must evidently be 1632, because he was in England in 1631. We have already shown that the painter was completely wrong, and involuntarily misrepresented the truth. His opponent objected to him that he drew large sums out of France by means of his engravings. To this he replied, on the 16<sup>th</sup> August, 1635, that he had never sent, directly or indirectly, into France, any copies of his plates, except those he had deposited at the Royal Library, those he had presented to his friends and the small number which at Peiresc's request he had sent to Tavernier, who had not asked him for any more since. If it were made a question of money, he added, his prints might be excluded from France, since they brought him honour enough in his own country, which was the only thing he cared about. In the following year Rubens's affairs seemed to be on a better footing, as his letter to Peiresc of the 16<sup>th</sup> March, 1636, shows; the plates of his imitators were condemned to be destroyed, and his copyright was upheld. In all his relations with his engravers, printers and publishers, he showed himself, as in all circumstances, a man of business, never losing sight of his interests and knowing how to have his rights respected.

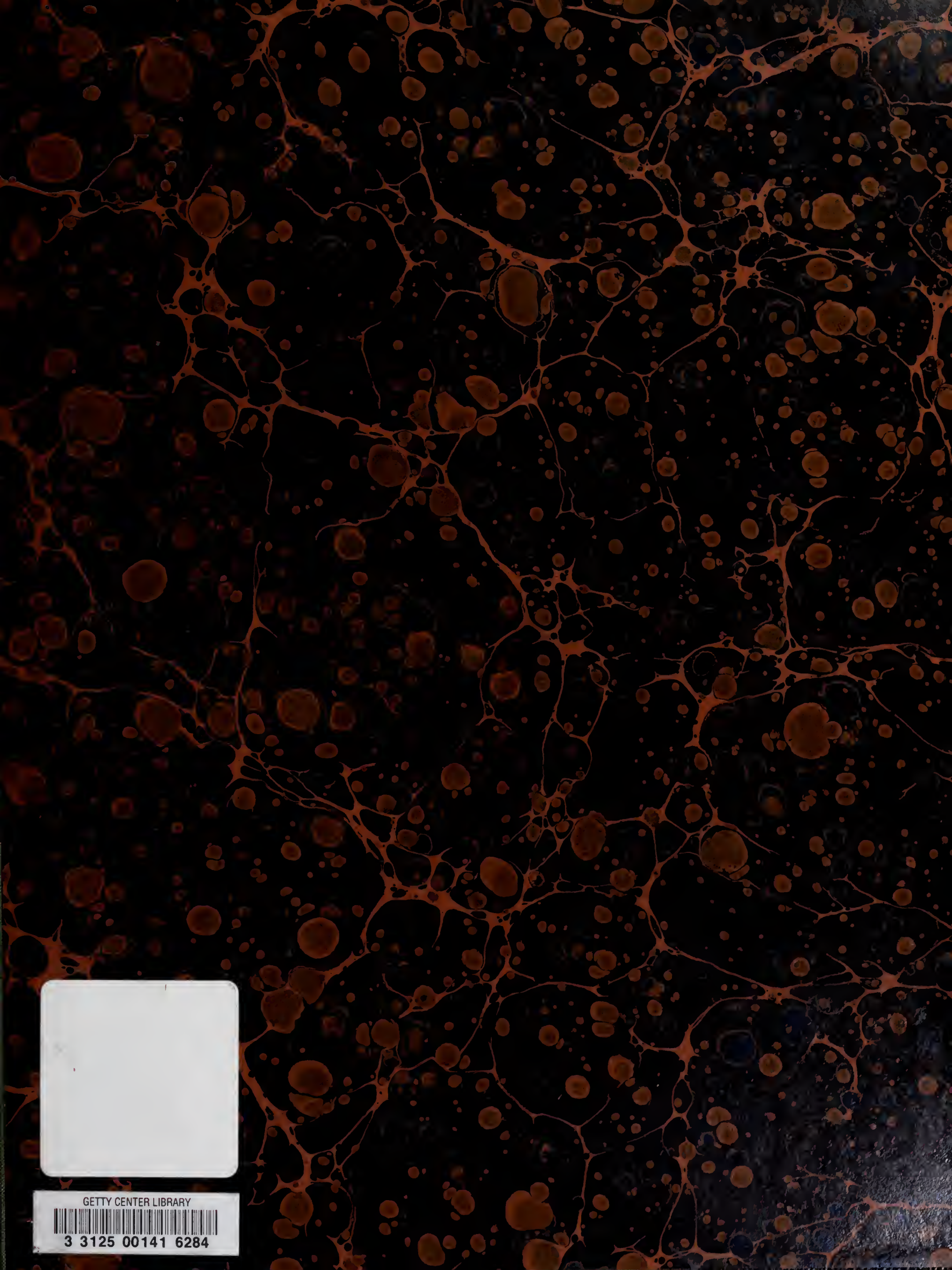
Rubens was the veritable founder of the great Antwerp school of engraving; he had animated and impregnated with his spirit those who were its chief representatives, had shaped them to his needs, and taught them to produce the effects of light and colour in black and white; he had communicated to their burins the suppleness of his pen and the sweetness of his tones to the lines they hollowed in the metal; he had taught them to render general effects with breadth, and put them above the brilliance of details. The works of his last years, in which he aimed chiefly at producing effects of colour and light, were less suitable to engraving and were therefore less often reproduced. Rubens himself at this period attached less importance to fine and carefully worked plates; and thus his school of engraving began to decline, even before his death. Some of its representatives still continued to work for another twenty years, and sustained its renown. But Rubens was no longer there to inspire them; he had no worthy successor, and the art which, during the last twenty years of his life, had contributed to make his name popular over the whole of Europe and admired far and wide for his productions, perished at Antwerp and went to flourish in other countries.











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